



I HAVE A MANSION IN THE POST-APOCALYPTIC WORLD

BOOK 06

Morning Star Ll

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I Have a Mansion in the Post-apocalyptic World

(我在末世有套房)

by

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Synopsis

Ruins stretched across the landscape in the apocalypse after the nuclear war.

If you accidentally survived on the wasteland, then you must be ready to face the endless hunger, ceaseless dangers, the mad zombies at night, and the peculiar mutant creatures that are the aftermaths of the constant radiation.

But for Jiang Chen, this place was heaven.

Mansions stood tall, luxurious cars parked on the street, high tech products and gold abandoned everywhere.

What? You were the president of a game development company before the war? You were responsible for the development of the 3D virtual reality online multiplayer game? Well, that's great, why don't you come work for me. The salary is two pieces of bread a day.

iPhone? Ultra thin design? Don't you see that the phone I invented are thinner than condoms?

Aircraft carrier? Fighter jets? Oh, I have those things as well, but they are designed for space combat.

Watch the story of Jiang Chen, who possessed the ability to travel through space and time, as he witness the creation of an empire stretched across space and time..

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Chapter 501: CIB's Reaction

CIB headquarters.

In the spacious director's office, a Caucasian male sunk into his chair while staring at the document in hand.

"An aerospace project? What is Future Group planning?" Ohm gazed at the documents and exclaimed.

Due to the catastrophic error made by the CIB in the last Hua mission, the former CIB director couldn't withstand the criticism from the public and resigned. Ohm finally got the opportunity to step up. Although due to various reasons, the current government adjusted the strategy against Future Group, the name Jiang Chen had been on the list of top priority targets.

From the collapse of the former Pannu regime to the fishing boat incident, and now the popular immersive virtual reality technology, as well as the deepwater mining technology that sparked conversations in the mining industry... the series of events were all related to that man. And intelligence indicated that Jiang Chen was behind the civil war in Country F, but without any evidence, the CIB couldn't do anything.

Instincts told Ohm that the guy is dangerous. Not because his existence endangered the national interest of UA, but his ability to create miracles. Because he had too many mysteries surrounding him, it made him remember a restricted document that existed for a long time...

"This is unclear, but the only thing we can be certain of is that they spent 5 billion purchasing two private aerospace technology companies on the brink of bankruptcy and restructured the two companies so that they are part of Celestial Trade's aerospace department. They also planned to move their assets to Xin," The agent stood beside Ohm reported calmly.

"What about customs?" Ohm's eyes didn't leave the document.

"11 equipment out of the two companies' assets were prohibited from being exported, but they didn't go through customs and sold the equipment at a discount to SpaceX. They don't seem to want the equipment, but the experts.

Ohm burst out laughing.

"Oh? Do they think that by just getting a bunch of graduates from MIT, they could make a rocket appear from nothing?"

Without the production capability, it would be impossible even to produce a screw on the rocket. It was not something that a few scientists could solve, the more advanced the technology, the higher the demand for the industrial foundation.

And to establish the foundation, it would require twenty to thirty years' time.

"We don't know, just like we don't know where they obtained that deep water mining equipment." The agent shrugged.

Ohm was silent.

Although he was not a technical expert, as someone with a science background, he knew a bit about the difficulty in deep water mining. The first problem was the material strength as materials rarely could withstand water pressure 7000 meters below the surface, let alone withstand that pressure to mine.

Virtual reality, deep water mining, and now they planned to enter aerospace. They seemed to be developing every field at the frontier of innovation without concern for cost. Frontier meant high risk, but it also meant high returns.

The shareholders of Future Group were complete gamblers, and gamblers unafraid of being all in. This was a common agreement among the investors on Wall Street.

"Is there a way to investigate where they obtained their

technology?" Ohm asked.

"I have been arranging for people to do this without much success." The agent had a wry expression on his face. "Currently we could only deduce that they have a hidden research institute, it could be underground, or disguised as another organization in Xin. Needless to say, while their intelligence work is somewhat careless, their confidentiality is flawless. "Could I request for additional personnel in Xin?"

"Very difficult." Ohm shook his head, "There are too many places that need people. Future Group is interesting, but it is a private corporation. Although some people from Congress are interested in their technology, the Capitol wants to win over Xin, and they instructed us to be restrained."

"Is the President not interested?" The agent asked.

"Let's say this. The energy giants are the ones providing the president with election funds, not the public companies on NASDAQ." Ohm said emotionlessly, "Our work's focus is still in the Middle East and East Europe. As to the interesting stuff, as long as it is not weapons of mass destruction, it is better to leave it to the businessmen to think for themselves."

Typically speaking, the CIB with an "undisclosed budget" didn't need to listen to the president too much. Their long rival FBA was the one loyal to the Capitol. But because of being "tricked" by the General Staff Department in Hua, CIB no longer had confidence in front of the Congress or the Capitol.

The reason why the former director retired early was that he didn't gain support in either Congress or Capitol. The rushed mission almost dragged the government into another diplomatic mud hole. Fortunately, Hua didn't protest on this incident or UA would be in the middle of another massive scandal.

Although Congress had no right to ask for the budget breakdown of the CIB, they did possess the power to cut the budget, and they

were doing that already. Even if Ohm didn't want to lean toward the president, he had to compromise because of the budget.

"Okay, the damned politics... But I want to say, Xin currently established the national security department and our work may be influenced. If we cannot receive support, I can't promise that there will be stable intelligence in the future." The agent sighed and shrugged without any other solutions.

"Then pretend and keep an eye on their launch project... I don't care about Future Group, but our little white rat seems to be disobedient recently," Ohm said.

"The Willie Society?" The agent guessed.

"That's right. Intelligence indicated that they received donations from an unknown source and they are no longer satisfied with the small place they are in as they have begun to reach out to our little friends in Europe. Another intelligence stated that they had contacted Jiang Chen to some extent," Ohm picked up another file and said without emotion.

"You're saying... there is a connection between Jiang Chen and the Willie Society."

"No, they don't have a common interest, no... if you force it, there is something." Ohm frowned as he mumbled while biting his thumb.

A word suddenly surfaced in his head.

[The Golden Apple...]

To be honest, until the Soviet collapse, collecting intelligence on the Golden Apple had been the job of the CIB. But followed by the conclusion of the cold war, the work was put aside due to the lack of information.

[But does that thing really exist? The tool that can communicate with the future.]

Ohm's no longer frowned as he self-mockingly shook his head.

[How could that thing exist, just like the Nazi military base in the Arctic.]

Reality is not a novel after all.

Chapter 502: Acquiring An Aerospace Company

The development of the private space industry had context to it. It was the failure of the early space shuttles, and the end of the cold war that caused the conclusion of the space race. The storm led the UA to drop a large number of important projects in the 80s which resulted in aerospace giants never realizing their investment and their enthusiasm for the industry taking a significant hit.

After the cut in the 90s, as well as the integration of the aerospace industry, Pratt & Whitney, Boeing, Lockheed Martin's monopoly of the market were not comparable to the 60s. They were more sensitive to risk and began to be half-hearted on commercial launches, only favoring the defense business. The price of launches was not only expensive but the RD-180 engine invested by the UA, due to manufacturers reluctance to build a plant, must depend on Russia for production.

It was this reason Russia could hold their head high against sanctions. They threatened to terminate the cooperation and to "cut the food supply" of the International Space Station. "Cutting the food supply" has been staged more than once, and time-tested. Until the rise of private space companies in recent years, this kind of insatiable threat started to lose its effectiveness.

Facts proved that the bureaucratic-led industry had no future, it was also reflected most vividly in the aerospace industry.

Take the famous private space company SpaceX as an example.

Its launch price has been low to a near-absurd point at only a fraction of the cost of the market. No country or business in the world could compete with them. These new companies inherited a large number of research results from the old era of space giants, but not the debt.

Speaking of SpaceX boss Elon Musk, he was also a legendary figure, but his popularity in Hua was far less than Steve Jobs. But if a few pieces of his astonishing feats were mentioned, his name was vivid in people's memory. For example, he and his partner founded PayPal online payment mechanism and by far the most successful way to pay online. After acquisition by eBay, he earned his first pot of gold in life.

Another example is the most recent year, the most popular car brand without a doubt, Tesla, was designed by him.

Not only that, he invited three well-known entrepreneurs to co-found SpaceX and made a strategic plan with "space tourism as a starting point. Open the era of privatization of space resources, and the destination to Mars."

And the fact proved that in the field of space technology, they were indeed walking in the forefront of the world.

Falcon rocket appeared out of nowhere, its trust weight ratio (trust to weight ratio) reached an astounding 1: 150! It replaced Russia's best score of 1: 120 and became the world's most advanced rocket. What made people more envious was that the rocket not only had a low launch cost, it actually could be reused! The first stage rocket hovered at the height of two hundred meters and then dropped vertically without damage.

Finally, its engine was 3D printed.

With so many advantages infused together, its market competitiveness is unparalleled. At the same time, its relationship with NASA, the UA Air Force, could almost be described as best friends. The pile of orders came storming in, and Elon Musk made a great fortune.

But it was precisely because of its astounding competitiveness that a lot of small private space companies were forced to the brink of bankruptcy.

SpaceX almost monopolized the most profitable defense orders, and the launch profits of commercial satellites were compressed to the limit for various reasons. For this very reason, Jiang Chen managed to use 5 billion USD floor price to buy two space companies for restructuring, enrich the Celestial Trade wholly-owned space science and technology center talent team.

Kelvin Burrow, former director and chief technical officer of Mississippi Aerospace Technologies, has a Ph.D. degree at Amber Reid University of Aeronautics and Astronautics and were involved in the early development of the Falcon Rockets. He later resigned to return home to establish the Mississippi Aerospace Technologies. But it turned out that not all scientists could be great businesspeople like Gates and Jobs. After failing to invest, his company owed 500 million USD in debt and wandered on the brink of bankruptcy.

Fortunately, Jiang Chen came just in time to "help" as he was able to keep his life's efforts without selling at a discount.

Of course, capital is ruthless. The first thing Jiang Chen did after he became chairman was sell most of the company's assets at a low price. At the same time offered their employees two times the original salary and a work visa to Xin.

"Do you know what you did? These assets are worth at least 200 million USD! And you sold it at a 50% discount to my old boss. Oh, God... If I'm Mr. Musk, I would be laughing in my sleep." They left Coro Airport, Kelvin dragged onto Jiang Chen and complained passionately.

"Mr. Musk won't laugh in his sleep, allow me to be honest, SpaceX won't care about your equipment. Coincidentally, I don't care either." Jiang Chen used a leisure tone and opened the car door for him.

"What do you mean?" The honest Kelvin immediately frowned.

"Exactly what you heard, trust me, when you arrive at the

destination, you'll have the same perspective as me." Jiang Chen sat at the front passenger seat.

Kelvin in the back glanced at the expressionless girl driving and then looked at Jiang Chen anxiously.

"Does she have a driver's license?"

The tip of Ayesha's mouth twitched. Jiang Chen paused and laughed.

"Don't worry, with my net worth, I should be more afraid of dying than you."

"Okay, I trust you... But I have to remind you, regardless of how rich you are, some things can't be purchased with money. I have 5671 pages of technical drawings, but I can assure you that this place won't have a plant that can turn my drawings into equipment."

"Is that so? Just throw your drawings out then." Jiang Chen didn't seem to care.

Kelvin paused and raised his eyebrows.

"Excuse me, what did you say?"

"Nothing, I still hold the same stance as before. I understand that you may have some anxious emotions to your new work location, but I hope you can remain calm. You're about to see some stunning things... Mhmm, the port is in the front, we have to change to a different transportation vehicle."

Kelvin scoffed as he replied "un huh" half-heartedly before not saying anything.

Although he was very dissatisfied with how Jiang Chen treated his company and his attitude toward his technical expertise, he had no reason to be angry with his salary. If there were a choice, he certainly would not sell his life's efforts. But unfortunately, as the founder, he didn't have a controlling stake of Mississippi

Aerospace Technology Company. Instead, it was controlled by profit-oriented capitalists. With the price offered by Jiang Chen, the company's other shareholders practically didn't hesitate before they provided their shares with both hands.

The car was parked in the garage next to the port. Ayesha slightly turned her head and spoke a language Kelvin did not understand, "He seems to be very dissatisfied with you.

"Of course, after all, I sold his hard work of six years, and labeled his research results as worthless." Pushing the door, Jiang Chen smiled.

Jiang Chen turned to look at the impatient Kelvin and said in English, "Well, Mr. Kelvin, we can board the yacht."

Kelvin shrugged and walked to the yacht.

"Is there no problem hiring him as the chief technology officer?" Ayesha looked at Jiang Chen feeling puzzled. "You are planning to give him something really important."

Ayesha knew more or less about Jiang Chen's secrets, that's why she was so concerned.

"The chief technology officer must be the job of a person with a strong technical background, and I really believe in his learning ability. I'm more tolerating toward talents. As to his rudeness, it is because of his meticulousness toward technicality and has nothing to do with loyalty. As long as I can bring out technology that will shock him, help him achieve his dream, and provide him with enough material reward, he has no reason to be stingy with his loyalty."

Jiang Chen thought about Jiang Lin when he spoke. He felt that they were the same kind of person.

The confused expression on Ayesha's face said that she didn't seem to understand what Jiang Chen said. But because of her absolute trust, she still nodded.

"If you believe him."

"Of course. If he betrays me, I will have to count on you." Jiang Chen laughed.

Ayesha didn't say a word and only nodded.

The traitor would be handled by the Ghost Agents.

No one could escape their pursuit...

Chapter 503: The Shocked Kelvin

Only a pile of gravel lied on the bare island. The golden sand was the primary color of the island. The alternating green and blue decorated the beautiful island located at the most southeastern part of Xin, north of the equator line.

The flat and wide land formation was the only advantage. The plant standing in the middle of the island was not yet painted as construction was completed not long ago.

Right now, Jiang Chen's private yacht was anchored by a crude fisher shack at the edge of the island.

The port belonged to a Xin fisherman. The honest fisherman didn't even know there was a change in political regime. It was not until an employee from Celestial Trade showed him the land certificate did he realize he was occupying private land.

But Jiang Chen didn't give him trouble as he purchased the crude shack along with the port for a price of 10,000 USD.

So the shack was the only standing structure other than the plant in the center of the island.

"This is the base of our company?" Kelvin twitched at the scene of the barren island.

He felt like he just experienced contract fraud.

[This is not going to work, this is being deported.]

"Of course not, but before the building is built, you will temporarily be working at the Celestial Trade Headquarters on Coro Island. Of course, your most important responsibility is to study the material that I will provide you."

"Huh? You will provide us with materials?" Kelvin raised his eyebrows as he scoffed at what Jiang Chen said.

Jiang Chen only smiled at Kelvin's arrogance without any

explanation.

"We're here, let's get off the boat."

Because of the lack of vegetation, the soil here was under constant exposure to sunshine which made it extremely brittle and scorching. Stepping onto the sand away from the port, Ayesha just in sandals felt discomfort. But she didn't express her discomfort and just slightly frowned.

But the acute change didn't escape Jiang Chen's eyes.

"Why don't you go rest for a bit on the boat? The island is extremely safe, and you don't have to worry about anything happening to me." Jiang Chen noticed her uneasiness and caringly whispered into her ear.

Ayesha's face turned red.

She deliberated for a moment and didn't insist further. She nodded and accepted the proposal

"Mhmm."

Jiang Chen watched Ayesha return to the boat and turned around to speak with Kelvin again on route to the plant in the middle of the island.

Jiang Chen pushed open the door, and waved away the dust in front of his face, and opened the metallic blinds on the side of the plant.

When the sunlight scattered into the building, Kelvin noticed a rocket engine placed on the large square frame.

The cylindrical design and bowl-shaped end were slightly smaller than SpaceX's Falcon engine. It made people suspect if it could really carry the payload.

"What is this?" Kelvin walked up and tapped on the engine.

"The RM-320 rocket engine, the technology I plan to show you." Jiang Chen passed the tablet containing specifications and 3D

visualization to him.

It was the rocket engine Jiang Lin showed Jiang Chen at the Aerospace Technology Research Institute, and the engine used by the Northwind-76 ballistic missile deployed at Shenxiang.

Every screw and every circuit was completely manufactured through 3D printing technology with a cost of 30000 credits. Lin Lin manufactured the fuel used by the rocket at 1000 credits per ton. But because raw materials could be transported from the modern world, the actual cost would be a bit lower.

Because of the appearance of the space elevator, the propulsion engines for aerospace purposes were abandoned at the end of the 21st century. The RM-320 was considered the most advanced aerospace engine from the wasteland.

The engine shell built with advanced materials could withstand 10,000 degrees of high temperature. The combustion chamber could withstand a pressure of up to 500 atmospheres. The most critical was that rockets built with this engine's thrust weight value could even reach an astounding 1: 300! It is undoubtedly superior compared to the SpaceX Falcon rocket's ratio of 1: 150!

"This is absurd. This kind of engine cannot be achieved with current technology. What about the materials? A normal engine cannot withstand this type of pressure and temperature... how is this possible... wait, what's with the rocket fuel's chemical formula."

Kelvin's eyes were locked on the screen as his complexion changed constantly. He sometimes shook his head, sometimes was shocked, sometimes widened his eyes...

Finally, his expression fixated on disbelief.

"This is absurd, no... this is too genius." He muttered to himself as his hands holding onto the tablet kept shaking, "This must be possible, no, only theoretically possible... But if this can be

achieved, Falcon will be a joke. This is too absurd..."

Suddenly, he looked toward Jiang Chen and grabbed Jiang Chen's arm fervently.

"Please, could you introduce me to the designer of this rocket engine? He is a genius."

"I will pass your compliments to him, but unfortunately, I can't introduce you to him yet." Jiang Chen shook his head.

"Why! Are you afraid I'm not going to be confidential? Be assured, I will sign any confidentiality agreement, please! I have a lot of questions I want to ask him," Kelvin said ardently.

The contempt on his face when he first got off the yacht no longer existed.

The design philosophy and innovation truly astounded him and shattered his arrogance in technical expertise.

"No, please don't be mistaken, I trust you. It is just that the designer of the rocket is currently in the middle of a project and doesn't want to be disturbed... I promise, if there is the opportunity, I will definitely introduce you to him. As to your question, I will provide you with a detailed rocket blueprint. You should be able to find the answer from there. If it still can't solve your confusion, I can pass on the question for you." Jiang Chen made something up on the fly.

[Funny, the designer of the rocket was not born yet, where am I going to find one for you?] Once the interdimensional bracelet could transport people, he would just grab Jiang Lin.

"Wait, I have another question, This kind of rocket engine cannot be completed with Xin's industrial foundation... Even UA's industrial foundation can't do it, where did you manufacture this
—"

"Right here." Jiang Chen smiled.

"Just here?" Kelvin was shocked.

"You should have heard of 3D printing before right? The engine right here is manufactured through an industrial grade 3D printer."

[The 3D printer could print material with high strength? And what is an "Industrial grade 3D printer"?]

Kelvin was completely stunned by the new technology as he temporarily lost his ability to speak.

Jiang Chen coughed to interrupt his thoughts.

"Okay, since you're done visiting, Mr. Kelvin, our trip for today is over... time to go back."

"No! Let me stay here! Please!" Kelvin gently caressed the surface of the engine. His ardent expression and action looked like he was caressing his lover's skin.

Although Jiang Chen was pleased with the fervent attitude of his scientist, he still thought his actions looked a bit gross...

"Mr. Kelvin, I have to remind that there is nothing here. Celestial Trade's headquarters has air conditioning and an endless amount of coffee. As to the complete blueprint of the engine, even if you are at the office—"

Kelvin rudely interrupted Jiang Chen's words.

"Just give me a tent, I will sleep here! And please bring the documents here for me, please!"

Jiang Chen tried his hardest to resist laughing as he nodded.

"If you insist."

Chapter 504: Heading to Frankberg

Launch rocket preparation was in full swing. Kelvin eagerly studied the rocket blueprints while remotely coordinating the company's restructuring through the phone. Celestial Trade employees brought him a tent, food and fresh water. While the conditions on the island were very harsh, the technician by his fanatical feelings toward aerospace overcame all these difficulties.

The 40 employees willing to relocate to work in Xin were placed on Coro Island. They digested the rocket launch technology Jiang Chen brought back from the apocalypse based on their responsibilities.

Of course, he didn't release the process to manufacture the materials used in the engine. Material science was the critical limiting factor to aerospace technology and the point of advantage of RM-320 compared to modern rocket engines.

In other words, even if the RM-320's blueprint were leaked, the people who obtained the blueprint would be unable to replicate one based on the blueprint. Just like it is impossible to build a skyscraper with just bricks, with the most fundamental problem unsolved, regardless of how advanced the technology, it would remain in the theoretical stage.

At the same time, Jiang Chen didn't forget the development of infrastructure.

Jiang Chen brought 20 construction robots manufactured from the Sixth Street. Jiang Lin inputted the construction blueprint of the rocket launch center and a hundred tons of materials to the modern world warehouse. They were then transported by vessel to the barren island.

Although Kelvin was stunned by the construction robots that Jiang Chen brought out, he didn't ask more. On the one hand, it was because he didn't specialize in that area and would not know

the technical difficulties in achieving automated construction robots. On the other hand, it was because he knew that even if he asked, Jiang Chen wouldn't tell him.

Other than constructing the rocket launch center, Celestial Trade constructed a radar station, drone terminal and a twenty person post under Jiang Chen's command; they also included the island to be part of the patrolled area to ensure the safety of the launch center.

As to the documents required to launch a commercial satellite, Jiang Chen assigned specific people to draft the document and submitted it to Zhang Yaping.

Time flew to the end of October.

Based on the agreement with Carmen Rothschild, the invited Jiang Chen would head to Frankberg for the auto exhibition hosted by Daimler Corporation and other auto giants. Based on the consideration of Future Technology and Daimler's partnership in artificial intelligence, attending the event was something mutually beneficial.

The day the news was released, Daimler Corporation's stock price rose by 4% after a long period of stagnation. People were speculating if Daimler Corporation will partner with Future Technology in artificial intelligence or even in immersive virtual reality.

On the other hand, the media were curious about Jiang Chen who had kept a low profile.

When the flight landed in Berm, and Jiang Chen had just stepped off of the plane, the reporters swarmed around him. The microphone labeled with Reuters, Paris Digest, Washington Post were all shoved in front of him.

With her brown hair tied back, Ayesha wore a black suit and walked two steps behind Jiang Chen with a briefcase in hand. To

the unfamiliar looking female assistant that appeared behind Jiang Chen, the media demonstrated interest toward her no less than Jiang Chen. They sensed paparazzi material from the two.

But contrary to the energized media, Ayesha's response was extremely distant as she pretended the reporters didn't exist at all. She ignored all the flashes and cameras.

As for Jiang Chen, he was in a suit and dealt with the media with a smile. But to the harsh or questions with other meanings, he completely neglected them.

"Mr. Jiang, does your attendance of the Berm Auto Exhibition mean Future Group's interest in the auto industry? In other words, is the Future Group sending the signal that artificial intelligence will enter the auto field?"

"On Future Technology's recent introduction of the immersive virtual reality helmet, how are you ensuring its safety? If someone used it to instill some abnormal content on people's brain, or illegally steal information from the user's brain, and this activity cannot be regulated by traditional means, how can you ensure that this behavior will not happen? Please excuse me for my presumptuous speculation; after all, the brain is human's last line of privacy."

"Would you engage in a partnership with other cooperations interested in virtual reality? Mr. Jiang Chen, the representative from the International Science Council stated that the era-defining technology should be shared with all humans around the world, and not become a method for a company to make money—"

"Mr. Jiang Chen, based on a recent article on Wall Street Journal, your company submitted the plan to launch a commercial satellite to international organizations through the Xin Government, does this mean Future Group plan to enter the aerospace industry?"

"A Stan professor stated that the protection mechanism in

Phantom is an illegal patent protection action and is against Consumer Rights Protection Act because consumers who buy the product have the right—"

Jiang Chen stopped walking and looked at a young reporter with curly hair.

"Please pass on my message to that professor to be careful with his choice of words. 'Phantom' helmet has not yet been officially released. Other than the experience stores that signed an exclusive agreement with us, only the official website launched a presale of 2.5 million units. Also, I can accountably tell you that whether it is presale or the official sale later this year, we will provide the product with a replacement policy if damaged within the warranty limit, and half-price exchange services for products out of warranty. Moreover, on the exchange agreement, we will make sure to add a line that any unauthorized demolition will be regarded as a breach of contract and the warranty will be automatically void. We fully protect the legitimate rights and interests of consumers; the only requirement is not to open our helmet. As for our peers who tried to disassemble the helmet, I sincerely advise you to purchase more to open up. But I promise you are doing no merit."

Seeing Jiang Chen to continue to walk forward, the reporter rushed up and extended his microphone out to stop him, but Jiang Chen already was gone.

The four muscular bodyguards surrounded Jiang Chen and Ayesha in the middle. Although they didn't wear kinetic skeletons this time, the strength amplified by the genetic vaccine was not something the weak reporters could block.

The reporters that surrounded them like flies followed them to the exit of the airport. It was not until when the Rothschild family greeted them and invited them onto their fleet did the reporters finally leave.

"Haha, we meet again, my friend." Carmen in the backseat smiled at Jiang Chen coming into the car.

"Nice to see you again, Mr. Carmen, how have you been?" Jiang Chen sat in the back and smiled back.

"I've great, thanks to your company's artificial intelligence program. It is designed flawlessly to fit our chip. The board and our partner have high expectations for the S700 we are introducing in the exhibition. Without a doubt, our product will be the center of attention at the show." Carmen smiled with his white teeth appearing.

Ayesha as the bodyguard and assistant sat in the front passenger seat, and the other four Celestial Trade bodyguards sat separately in the two vehicles in the front and back.

"The program was designed specifically for you."

A one billion dollar deal. Future Technology logo to be displayed for one second during startup, and a 30 billion USD loan. The Rothschild helped out greatly in Future Group's rapid expansion.

But in their conversation today, Carmen didn't mention the loan at all and didn't even ask about the state of Future Group. They only discussed hobbies and interests.

"Are you interested in a private jet? With your current asset, you have the ability to purchase one. It would not only ease your visit, it could also reduce a lot of unnecessary troubles." Carmen jokingly glanced back at the reporter vehicle following them.

"I will consider buying one, can you give me a recommendation?" Jiang Chen smiled.

"In the Auto Exhibition two days later, Gulfstream's Europe division manager Andy Belfort will be attending. I can introduce you to him. I highly recommend their Gulfstream G650. Whether it is functionality or appearance, the G650 is superior to other jets at the same price point."

"Then I will thank you in advance." Jiang Chen smiled.

He considered long ago about buying a private jet, but because he was focused on the apocalypse back then, and there was no need for a plane, he put the idea aside. Now that Carmen mentioned it, he used the opportunity to inquire further.

"No problem, Mr. Belfort will be happy to meet you too."

Johnson was driving, Carmen's bodyguard and driver; former Fran's special force.

Every time Carmen traveled, he would accompany him. Although the Rothschild family kept a low profile, there were still people that kept an eye on them. Whether those who sought a lucrative ransom, or business opponents, or the Palestinian suicide holy warrior.

Johnson turned the wheel while glancing at Ayesha who sat beside him.

For some reason, the girl that nowhere resembled a warrior gave him a faint dangerous feeling. Not just her, the four bodyguards that Jiang Chen brought made the war-battered him cautious.

Before Ayesha noticed, he drew his sight back

[This is so fu*king weird.]

Johnson cursed in his mind before he focused on the road in front of him.

Chapter 505: Rothschild's Manor

It took an hour before the car fleet arrived at Rothschild's manor located in Bava.

"It is not our way of treating our guest to allow them to live in hotels. This manor is our family's asset. There won't be any reporters here to disturb you. I hope you enjoy it," After getting off the car, Carmen explained politely.

They were indeed an old aristocracy from the Napoleonic era, having money was not just enough to purchase such a magnificent manor in Frankberg. From the classical decoration and the historic stone walls, they were the faint glimpse of the historical heritage of this manor.

It was as if this place was not a manor, but a century history museum.

A butler named Ccides brought the four bodyguards to another building in the manor where the servants lived. Of course, that was only a traditional way of referring to the building; the actual living conditions were no inferior to a five-star hotel.

Ayesha was supposed to live there, but the old butler acutely saw her relationship with Jiang Chen was not as simple as what it was on the surface, so he arranged them to stay in the same room in the main building.

Inside, the redwood floor had a mixture of fresh wooden scent. There were a Germanic noble style bed and a decorative fireplace. The entire bedroom looked elegant but comfortable.

They were indeed an old aristocracy; even their lodging was classy.

When Jiang Chen saw the room, he made up his mind that he will design a similar bedroom in his mansion. As a self-created wealthy person, he never really studied class and elegance.

The maid in the manor cleaned the room before the two arrived. After letting Jiang Chen know about the amenities in the building, he took the two to the dining room.

Dinner was as lavish as he had imagined, but the taste and nutrition were impeccable. The wine was from Rothschild's Lafitte vineyard. Although he didn't know the year, just from the rich aroma of the wine, it was not hard to smell the hefty price.

Speaking of which, the most impressive things that belonged to the Rothschild family were probably the red wine and the bank. No one knew how rich they are; because they wrote in their family code that they would never display their wealth, even if it meant that they give up the opportunity to make money through a public offering.

To the world that questioned its decline, they ignored it. To the exaggerated dismissive in the novel "Currency War," they turned a deaf ear. Perhaps this was the old aristocratic calmness.

On the dinner table, Carmen and Jiang Chen had a great conversation and didn't talk about business at all. Ayesha was as quiet as usual, focusing on the mutton in her plate.

After dinner, it was getting late. Carmen courteously wished Jiang Chen to enjoy his experience and reminded him not to miss the party tomorrow night before he left. The manor seemed to be a place where Rothschild hosted their honored guests. As a family member, he didn't live there.

Jiang Chen took a shower in the marble washroom before returning to the bedroom.

Ayesha had returned one step ahead of him as she was playing with a pen-shaped device on the bed. Jiang Chen recognized the device, The anti-surveillance detection device, sold at most of the weapon shops at the Sixth Street.

Jiang Chen dried his hair with the towel around his neck and

smiled at Ayesha.

"Did you find anything?"

Ayesha shook her head.

"No."

"Looks like the Rothschild is treating us with honesty." Jiang Chen was pleased.

What he didn't know was, it was not that Carmen didn't try. When they first partnered up, the USB he gave Jiang Chen contained a mini positioner. But because it was thrown into the storage dimension, that thing didn't have any effects.

When Carmen discovered the positioner mysteriously disappeared, Carmen learned and didn't do any small tricks that wouldn't even "escape" his eyes.

Jiang Chen sat beside Ayesha, smelt the fragrance of jasmine, and knew she showered already.

With a hand around her frail waist, Jiang Chen whispered into her ear.

"Did you bring the schedule?"

Her ear felt ticklish from the warm air, and her face carried the redness from just getting out from the shower as Ayesha timidly nodded.

"Mhmm, it's in the briefcase."

Just as she was about to get up and get the briefcase, the hand around her waist had no intention of letting go.

Ayesha turned her head and met his naughty sight.

"We can look at it tomorrow, why don't we rest early today?" Jiang Chen had a smirk on him as his right hand began to explore.

It was a long night.

The next morning, because they slept early, Jiang Chen woke up

bright and early.

He woke the sleepy Ayesha up, and after washing up, they came to the dining room for breakfast.

Then, Ayesha took the schedule from Jiang Chen.

Day one, arrive in Frankberg, no other plan.

Day two, free during the day, then attend a party hosted by Carmen Rothschild at the manor in Bava.

Day three, attend the Auto Exhibition.

Day four, free.

Day five, return to Xin.

The five-day schedule was not compact. With a rare opportunity to visit, Jiang Chen would obviously not miss the opportunity to explore the unfamiliar but beautiful kingdom. He heard that there is a famous attraction in Bava – the New Swan Fort which was the original model for Disney's Castle. With this opportunity, Jiang Chen planned to take Ayesha there.

No one was certain if the wonders that belonged to humanity could still be seen in the future...

But before he left the manor, Jiang Chen planned to take Ayesha to tour the attraction in front of them.

The Rothschild Manor.

Holding onto her soft hand, walking on the marble brick road, sensing the slightly chilly morning breeze, Jiang Chen gazed at the green pine forest. Behind the forest was a vast lake.

Not far off from the Lake, Jiang Chen caught a small wooden cabin near the forest as well as a sail that stood in front of the cabin. The sail didn't look finely crafted, but from the matching proportion and the smooth arc, Jiang Chen could still see the meticulous effort.

A man in a parka was carefully sawing a piece of wood.

[Building a boat?]

Due to curiosity, Jiang Chen took a few extra looks.

The old man seemed to have noticed Jiang Chen's attention as he waved at the two with a friendly gesture before leaving them alone and focusing on his task at hand.

Jiang Chen put down his waving hand and muttered in a small voice.

"The servant of the Rothschild family?"

Jiang Chen shook his head and put this encounter in the back of his head. He held Ayesha's hand to continued walking along the marble slab road.

What Jiang Chen didn't know was, before he disappeared from the old man's sight, the old man's eyes gazed at his back.

The slightly raised eyebrows seemed to indicate that he was thinking.

Chapter 506: Dinner

When they left the manor, the butler prepared a black Benz for the two of them. The car exited the manor from the side door quietly without alerting reporters.

Because it was a private outing, Jiang Chen didn't bring the four Celestial Trades bodyguards. The reason was partially because of his confidence in his own abilities and partially because traveling with four muscular men would ruin the mood.

The entire day, Jiang Chen took Ayesha to tour the attractions in Bava. From the New Swan Fort to the Lake of Alpines, their footsteps traversed the entire area. It wasn't until the sun was setting that the two of them, with an entire memory card full of photos, called it a day.

Looking at the weary but excited red glow on the girl's face, Jiang Chen was delighted.

"Did you have fun today?"

"Mhmm!" Ayesha nodded, pleased.

Her normally expressionless face displayed a rare liveliness fitting for her age.

Jiang Chen smiled. He took the wheel and turned the car onto a rural road.

With just one glance, a golden wheat field entered their sight. The horizon in the distance connected the darkening sky with the jagged mountains. Dusk as a backdrop for the mountains looked magnificent and poetic.

It was already deep into the fall. On the wasteland, it probably started snowing.

Jiang Chen stared at the scene, amazed at the beauty.

Ayesha, by the side, raised her camera and captured a beautiful

image.

Seeing as there was still some time, Jiang Chen took a detour and continued along the rural road.

Suddenly, his field of vision expanded.

At the end of the wheat field was a town with scattered lights. Between where the forest connected was a small town segregated by an iron fence. The people in ragged clothes gathered together, looked at the sky, and took care of their malnourished families. In front of the refugee camp, a couple of workers and polices gathered around a few vans as they distributed food and water.

"They are..."

With the camera in her hands, Ayesha gazed at the segregated area in the distance.

"People without a home are known as refugees. They left their home because of the war and most of them are from Libya or Sy —" Jiang Chen stopped suddenly.

He realized it was her hometown.

It must be a terrible feeling to see people from her hometown who had to flee their home.

Snap.

But she merely raised her camera and captured the scene.

"Don't you feel... uh... bad?" Jiang Chen was careful with his words.

Ayesha nodded then shook her head.

"Thank you."

"Mhmm?"

Jiang Chen looked at Ayesha, puzzled.

She lowered her head with a wistful smile. Her frail fingertips subconsciously rubbed the shutter of the camera.

"If I hadn't met you... I might not even have made it here."

She recollected everything that happened in the past. While she occasionally encountered danger, most of the time, she felt the warmth of the family. Jiang Chen didn't treat her with brute force just because of her identity; he had always been gentle.

As for his other aspects, she completely forgot about the pain.

"Stop thinking about weird things." Jiang Chen grinned and used his right hand to rub her hair with force.

"I wasn't."

Ayesha shook her head and hugged the camera as a shallow smile appeared on her face.

The golden girl gilded by the dusk was holding onto a priceless treasure.

...

When they returned to the Rothschild manor, it was around six.

The butler was waiting for them at the gate.

There was still an hour before the party started. Although Jiang Chen thought there was still an ample amount of time, the adamant butler thought otherwise.

Their attire was provided by the Rothschild family. Since Jiang Chen hadn't known about the party before he arrived, he didn't have any formal attire with him. As for Ayesha, she returned to her room to rest as she wasn't accustomed to this type of gathering.

After being worked on by a few meticulous maids for a while, Jiang Chen barely made it to the party venue before it started.

"Mhmm, not bad, it fits you well."

Carmen smiled at Jiang Chen at the door.

"Thank you." They walked together into the venue.

The circular venue was decorated exquisitely with class. The diamond chandeliers illuminated the ceiling of the venue. Influential and powerful people from all industries were gathered there; the duchesses and celebrities chatted amongst themselves while waiters with champagne traversed between the circles.

The people invited to the gathering were mostly leaders in finance, industry tycoons or powerful politicians. Because he was outside of the "circle," Jiang Chen didn't see anyone he knew.

He didn't know if it was an illusion or not but the instant he walked into the room, at least ten pairs of eyes consciously and subconsciously were focused on him.

"The Rothschild family isn't most proud of the assets we possess, but rather, it's the connections we have. A few guests here are the major shareholders of one hundred billion public companies, and quite a few people here were the president or vice president of a country; we consider all of these people our friends. The business partnerships established at a party is no lesser than any established at an international business summit. This kind of party will be hosted by us every few months. You are all gathered here at just the right time; I can introduce you all to a few interesting people."

Carmen smiled with his white teeth showing. He opened his arms wide and greeted the man with red hair walking towards him.

"Long time no see, Carmen, my old friend."

"Haha, my friend, long time no see indeed. Let me introduce you - this is Jiang Chen." Carmen introduced him to his friend.

The red-haired man displayed a slightly shocked expression before he immediately smiled and extended his right hand.

"Glad to meet you, Mr. Jiang Chen. Your company's Phantom helmet left me with a profound expression. But unfortunately, your colosseum server only opened level 10 combat. I look forward to the day when the game is officially released. I'm Peter McLean -

you can call me Peter."

Jiang Chen shook Peter's hand as he replied, "Nice to meet you, Peter. I trust that when that day comes, I assure you won't be disappointed."

"Peter McLean, the president of UK's Guardian, the second largest data backup equipment company in Europe. The old rival of IBM." Carmen introduced him casually to Jiang Chen.

"Don't make fun of me." Peter made an exaggerated expression.
"Why don't we have some champagne to lighten up the mood?"

Due to the restriction of language and other influences, European tech companies were naturally at a disadvantage. Although the Guardian received contracts from British forces, IBM didn't view this old rival as competition anymore.

"Great idea." Carmen laughed. "For this party, I brought the most expensive wine from Bava vineyards; please enjoy."

A table was lined up with crystal cups; the waiter courteously poured Jiang Chen a cup of wine.

Just as Jiang Chen wondered if he should find a "useful" circle of people to mingle with, a man with a beer belly walked up to him with a bright smile.

Beside him was a young blonde girl.

"You must be Mr. Jiang Chen, am I correct?"

Chapter 507: Mature Deepwater Mining Technology

He was dressed in a sharp-looking suit and shoes. He had a reflective head, a round face with wrinkles beginning to appear, and a smile that didn't make him feel disgusted.

The girl standing beside him had curly blonde hair, complemented by a black dress that outlined her beautiful figure. It certainly made a clear contrast with the man's balding head and beer belly.

"And you are?" Jiang Chen looked at him, confused.

"Luke Joyce. Speaking of which, we are business partners." Luke raised his wine glass and toasted Jiang Chen.

[Business partners?]

Jiang Chen didn't recall having a business partner with this name.

Luke acutely recognized the confusion in Jiang Chen's eyes as he added:

"Looks like Mr. Jiang Chen doesn't seem to like to study the shareholder structure of your business partners. I'm a shareholder of BHP."

Earlier, Future Group signed an iron and aluminum ore export agreement with BHP. Although Future Mining was formed at a later date with a major breakthrough in deep water mining technology, the extracted manganese nodules met Future Group's iron demands, so Future Group terminated the iron export agreement. But in terms of aluminum, Future Group still relied on BHP's exports.

Jiang Chen immediately had a realization.

"Yes, Mr. Luke, I apologize for my rudeness."

Luke didn't mind at all and continued to introduce his female companion.

"This is my daughter, Melinda Joyce."

"It's nice to meet you, Mr. Jiang Chen. I'm a loyal fan of Future Technology." Melinda extended her hand.

Although he was slightly shocked, Jiang Chen didn't reveal any emotions on his face as he politely took her hand and smiled. "Hello, Miss Melinda, I'm pleased Future Technology satisfies you."

The shock in Jiang Chen's mind was no less than someone pointing out an ogre and elf and telling him with a serious expression that they were actually father and daughter.

"Haha, my daughter is really curious about your legendary expression. If there is an opportunity, you guys should chat." Luke wiggled his eyebrows at Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen obviously understood the hints in Luke's voice. It didn't take too many sentences before it was apparent he was trying to arrange a marriage for his daughter.

But unfortunately, Jiang Chen was not interested in his daughter.

"It's not a legendary experience - only good luck," Jiang Chen said humbly.

Although his words were humble, they weren't wrong. If it wasn't for his interdimensional travel abilities, he wouldn't be where he was today.

"Please don't say that, Mr. Jiang Chen. That would make 7 billion people upset because someone can make it onto the Forbes list just through luck." Melinda's red lips formed a smile.

Jiang Chen opened his hands to emphasize that his words were true, but unfortunately, no one believed him. But from Luke and Melinda's perspective, his gesture was self-mocking, lightening up

the atmosphere.

After some chitchat, perhaps she noticed that Jiang Chen was uninterested in her, so Melinda politely disappeared and left some time for the two of them to talk business in other circles. Luke didn't feel surprised at his daughter leaving as he clearly saw that Jiang Chen wasn't interested, so he didn't force it while he continued the conversation with Jiang Chen.

Luke was very talkative as their conversation spanned from sailing to golf. Jiang Chen, however, did most of the listening because he didn't know too much about either area and it wasn't a good time to pretend he knew.

In the end, the conversation finally steered back to business.

"Speaking of which, why is Mr. Jiang Chen keeping such a tight control on your shares? If Future Group becomes public on NASDAQ, without a doubt, you will be the wealthiest man in the world," Luke exclaimed.

"Because I believe in the future of Future Group. I believe the wealth it will bring me is no less than what a public offering can bring me," Jiang Chen said lightheartedly.

"But if you work with people who share the same ambition, won't you expand faster?" Luke smiled.

"Does Mr. Luke think my Future Group is expanding slowly?" Jiang Chen asked back in a joking tone.

Luke paused and began to chuckle.

"You're right. Since your inception, Mr. Jiang's company hasn't exhibited even one problem with cash flow; it's certainly an impressive feat."

"That's an exaggeration." Jiang Chen was humble.

"Can I ask a question?" Luke passed his empty glass to the waiter and picked up another one.

"Of course, if I can answer."

"Whether it's Future 1.0 or the current Phantom, your company always introduces products that are favored by the market. There's also nutrient supply and deep water mining technology... What's the next product?" Luke asked.

"We'll probably further develop the virtual reality market or perhaps invest in manned space missions because I'm personally interested in space... Why do you ask?" Jiang Chen said casually.

"To avoid accidentally becoming your competition." Luke wryly shrugged his shoulders and joked to Jiang Chen: "Because of your virtual reality project, this sector in the NASDAQ is obliterated as most public companies fell from cloud nine to a deep abyss. Almost all investors who experienced the Phantom first-hand became aware that their investments in virtual reality faltered. Especially when a Harvard professor stated that it's a technology that can't be achieved in 20 years..."

Not even 20 years - in the timeline in the apocalypse, the first immersive virtual reality equipment only appeared in 2050.

"Then I do have to apologize." Jiang Chen used a tone that he didn't mean at all.

"Haha, no need to apologize to me. I didn't place bets on the frontier of technology. In terms of investment philosophy, I share the same view as Carmen," Luke said.

He took a sip of the champagne and continued:

"What does Mr. Jiang think about the resources industry?"

"Supply over demand."

"That's right." Luke smiled and nodded. "Just two days ago, BHP sold two iron mines in the red, but every shareholder, including me, knows that it's a futile action. The mining business will only get harder and harder - not just in iron, but all other resources other than precious metals will face a similar downward trend."

"Oh, is that so?" Jiang Chen said thoughtfully.

"Of course, since there's a limit to market demands, take the rebar used in the construction sector. Most people will only have one house in their life, but a house's life can be much longer than its owner. So even if we have been dominating in the resource sector, we have to use some of the money to support... industries that may give birth to new things such as the Rothschild family's Dalmer Group that invests in new energy vehicle projects that are bottomless pits. Then, for example, without doing due diligence on investment projects, we can lend 30 billion to a tech company with a bright future."

"It's easy to bring ore up to the surface level. Just take my old friend in the Rothschild family. Vale, under their control, is the biggest iron ore supplier in the world with an estimated reserve of 4 billion tons. The mines can produce for up to 400 years and this is just public data." Luke paused for a moment and exchanged a long but meaningful glance with Jiang Chen.

"During this pivotal time, if a mining technology could decrease the cost of mining and include depositions previously inaccessible on the list of current reserves, what kind of influence do you think this would have on the poor mining sector?"

When he heard all this, Jiang Chen more or less guessed Luke's goal behind the conversation and why Carmen brought him to meet him.

"You mean that some technologies are too advanced?"

"That's right." Luke nodded.

"For example?"

"For example, mature deep water mining technology."

Jiang Chen's pupils contracted.

Chapter 508: Mutually Satisfactory Agreement

"Because of the breakthrough you made in the deepwater mining field, the futures of iron, copper, gold, and molybdenum have accelerated their demise. To maintain the stability of the market, the mining giants have spent quite some effort. Of course, the key to solving the problem is on you."

How many deposits were there in the ocean? If Future Mining made a significant breakthrough in the area, investors' expectations for deep water mining would, without a doubt, heat up. How many resources were there available in the sea? Aside from Jiang Chen who already acquired a global mining reserve map, no one knew.

And investors themselves were creatures who loved to imagine.

Luke smiled at Jiang Chen.

"If I guessed correctly, Future Mining's costs for deepwater mining projects aren't high, and the production is sizable."

Luke's expression clearly showed he wasn't clueless. There was no purpose in covering things up, so Jiang Chen didn't try to hide the truth.

"You guessed correctly."

Labor costs only included the salary of the employees on the sea platform; the underwater equipment was powered by the tidal generator, making the cost of maintenance almost negligible. The only equipment costs were paid in crystals. Without knowing the ratio between crystals and modern world currency, he couldn't calculate the cost of equipment.

But he was certain about one thing - the costs of deep water mining were extremely low before space mining appeared.

"The world's iron, aluminum, and copper markets are already on the brink of collapse. Without any exaggeration, if the price of iron continues its downward trend, by end of the year, 47 mining companies will face the risk of bankruptcy. In the short term, it may be beneficial to us, but it's also dangerous for us in the long term. So I want to solve the problem by taking a step back."

"So what do you propose?" Jiang Chen was quite intrigued as he looked at the smiling Luke.

"If I remember correctly, you can influence the political decisions of the Xin government. We want you to influence the presidential office's decision and increase the mining export tax by 50% to limit domestic exports of mining resources," Luke said in a quiet voice.

To Jiang Chen's surprise, he previously thought Luke wanted to purchase Future Mining's technology, but he didn't even mention this and only offered a proposal that didn't really affect Future Mining.

"Limit Future Mining's access to the international market to cooldown the investors? But what do I gain from this?"

"We obviously won't make you do this for free. I'm willing to provide you contracts for iron, aluminum, copper and other metals effective within five years at 80% of the current market price."

For BHP, it was indeed a big step backward. A discount of 20% meant they were essentially providing the metals at cost and working for free for Future Group for the next five years in exchange for slowing down Future Group's low-cost ores from entering international markets.

"Use the power of capital to slow down the introduction of new technologies?" Jiang Chen's words seemed to carry more meaning than the surface suggested.

"You could interpret that as paying enough compensation in the hope of delaying the introduction of technology to the world. In a

market where supply exceeds demand, introducing technology isn't beneficial to the market," Luke said with sternness.

Luke was clear with BHP's stance on this.

For an international mining tycoon, Jiang Chen wasn't naïve enough to think they would use market competition to solve the problem. To be able to own so many mining resources in multiple nations around the world, their political investments certainly couldn't be underestimated.

The reason why Luke brought it up was because they wanted to avoid a direct conflict with Future Group. Since Future Group was no longer a small fish in the sea, its core focus was in space tech and not in resource extraction, so both sides could avoid unnecessary conflict.

On the other hand, BHP wasn't the only company affected - Rothschild-controlled Vale was the largest mining company in the world. It would be hard to say this encounter had nothing to do with Carmen.

Jiang Chen's head spun rapidly as he weighed the pros and cons of the proposal.

If possible, Jiang Chen wanted to avoid a direct conflict with the mining giants. Future Technology's business expansion required a stable environment. It was unwise to create enemies for himself.

Especially since excessive resources were only relative to the current situation. Although the theme of the proposal required both parties to take a step back, it would be hard to determine who actually gained and who actually lost...

Luke patiently waited for Jiang Chen's response.

Without making him wait for long, Jiang Chen spoke after a momentary pause.

"Five years? Can I ask the supply amount?"

"Determined by you." Luke made a generous offer as he elegantly sipped his champagne.

When Jiang Chen heard this, an undetectable smile appeared on his face.

"80 million tons."

When Luke heard Jiang Chen's number, he almost spat out the champagne in his mouth.

"80 million tons? Does Mr. Jiang have an idea of the number you just provided? I'm not joking - even if all of Xin's steel plants operated continuously for 50 years, there would still be an excess of ores left."

Hua's iron ore imports for 2015 was 950 billion tons and Xin's total area was less than half of any of Hua's provinces. It was a question if they could process the ores in 15 years, let alone five years!

But this was an outsider's perspective.

"You don't have to worry about this - Future Group naturally has the resources to process the resources. Also, something worth mentioning is that the 80 million is the sum total of iron, aluminum, copper, nickel - not just iron alone. Of course, iron would make up the majority of the number, at least 75%." Jiang Chen smiled.

With his eyebrows tightly locked together, Luke hesitated for a moment before nodding.

"At most 50 million tons, and you must assure me that the ores provided at cost must not enter international markets. This will be written in the contract."

"No problem. But I have to mention now that the mines may be processed at neighboring Papua New Guinea before being transported to Xin," Jiang Chen reminded him.

With the shortage of labor, Jiang Chen planned to move the industries with high population and labor demands to neighboring countries. As a developing country, Papua New Guinea was a great choice in addition to Moro still in its beginning stages.

Luke deliberated for a bit longer before finally giving him a nod.

"No problem."

"Also, molybdenum, uranium, and other precious metals are not included in the contract restrictions," Jiang Chen proposed.

"No problem. Molybdenum and the precious metals market have been under the control of Hua and nothing to do with us... Also, if I may ask, is it feasible to extract uranium from deep water?" Luke was curious.

"Not now, but it doesn't mean it's not feasible in the future. We may have a breakthrough in the next five years; it's hard to say," Jiang Chen replied with ambiguity.

"Is that so? That's surprising. If you don't have any other opinions, then I'm happy we've reached an agreement." Luke raised his glass with a smile.

"I wish only success for our partnership." Jiang Chen also raised his cup with a mysterious smile flashing and fading on his face.

Following the crisp sound of their toast, the agreement worth billions had been settled. The two sides both had satisfied smiles as they received what they needed.

Luke received the promise that Future Mining wouldn't introduce deep water mining technology to the global market. Although they wouldn't make money on 50 million tons of ores, BHP would not take losses on these. With the current market, it was incredible to maintain an income statement without losses without decreasing production. Although on the surface, it might look like BHP was working for Future Group for free, from another angle, Future Group solved the excessive production capacity issue

faced by BHP.

The gains for Jiang Chen were obvious - he obtained 50 tons of ores at the floor price. It was a critical deal for Future Group's planned construction of floating ocean cities, space elevator terminals, and habitable mega space stations.

It wouldn't be five years before Luke would regret the agreement he made tonight.

Excessive production was always relative to the present.

The only thing that made Jiang Chen puzzled was how Luke was so confident about Future Mining's costs and production as well as his calmness about deep water mining technology without any intention of acquiring the technology.

Jiang Chen stared at the glass in his hand and entered deep thought.

Chapter 509: The Conversation before the Bonfire

With a pleased smile, Luke excused himself and walked to other social circles. Watching Luke leave, Jiang Chen thought he would escape from the need to socialize, but he clearly underestimated his appeal or Future Group's attraction to investors.

The gazes upon him were either indifferent, jealous, or respectful, but they were all without disregard.

As the newcomer to the party and the president of Future Group with substantial influence in the tech industry, regardless of their intentions, there were plenty of people eager to say hello to Jiang Chen and exchange business cards. Regardless if a partnership could be reached, it didn't hurt to have more friends, right?

Therefore, for the next two hours, Jiang Chen was socializing tirelessly.

"Mr. Jiang Chen, it's nice to meet you, this is my business card... If you have any needs in acquisition services, please contact our bank," a banker said.

"Mr. Jiang, are you interested in equity infusion? Don't rush to reject me yet, haha. If Future Group ever runs into problems with a turnaround or large investment project, please contact us!" A Wall Street investor looked at Jiang Chen as if he was staring at a gold vault.

"Is this your first time in Germany? If you have time, I'd be very happy to take you to explore this beautiful country." A female with a celebrity face offered, but Jiang Chen couldn't remember her name.

...

In just two hour's time, his suit's not-so-wide pockets were stuffed with different kinds of business cards and his gold-gilded

business cards were almost all distributed.

While he was responding to the sincere guests, Jiang Chen's gaze had been intentionally or unintentionally swinging to the foie gras, Marseille fish soup, and other delicacies. But unfortunately, when the melodious violin was replaced by the waltz, guests walked to the circular dance floor while holding hands.

By then, the food on the table was replaced by too-sweet desserts.

When he exited the venue, the cold breeze blowing on his face alleviated some of the irritating heat. Perhaps he breathed in too much carbon dioxide, but Jiang Chen felt that the air from the pine forest was especially fresh.

Carmen disappeared after closing remarks and Jiang Chen didn't wait for him as he left along with the other guests exiting the venue. To be precise with their relationship, they were partners rather than friends.

Because he wanted to stay out for longer, Jiang Chen took a detour and followed a rock path along the pine forest.

His shadow was elongated by the streetlights. He flipped through his stack of business cards and put the useless ones in his left pocket while the potentially-useful ones were placed in his right pocket. Before he threw them into the storage dimension, he wanted to categorize the business cards in some way to avoid confusion when they were actually needed.

But the ones he felt might be useful were only cards.

One belonged to Luke while the other one belonged to Elon Musk.

Jiang Chen didn't think he would meet that guy here. The middle-aged man with brown hair shook Jiang Chen's hand with a bright smile. He clearly heard rumors of Jiang Chen's intention to enter the aerospace industry by purchasing aerospace companies, but in the face of strong competition, he hadn't displayed any

opposing attitude. Rather, he hoped to cooperate with Future Group in aerospace to achieve the great-but-distant strategic goal of colonizing Mars.

Although in Jiang Chen's eyes, this goal wasn't too far out of reach.

All in all, Jiang Chen kept the business cards. Perhaps he could cooperate with him in the aerospace industry.

Just as he was halfway through the cards, his stomach made a rumbling sound.

"Still hungry... Whatever, I'll get some food when I go back." Jiang Chen sighed.

But then the aroma of roasted meat swept by and lingered in his nostrils.

He followed the direction of the wind and saw a faint bonfire deep in the pine forest.

The roasted meat smell seemed to be coming from there, but who, at this time, would roast meat that close to the Rothschild manor?

It obviously wasn't Carmen - he must be busy wrapping up his party.

"Could it be a Rothschild servant?" Jiang Chen mused to himself.

For some reason, he thought about the elderly man he saw in the morning, the man who was constructing a sail beside the cabin.

With curiosity driving him, Jiang Chen walked in the direction of the fire.

Dried but soft pine needles covered the muddy ground and sounded damp when stepped on. It was cool in the forest. It was quiet too, a complete contrast to the noise at the party.

[After I'm done playing around, I'll buy a house in an area like this to live in seclusion.]

For some reason, the idea suddenly popped up in his mind before he quickly shook his head and scratched the idea.

He was still young and without exception, he would continue to be young. If he didn't live life to the fullest for a hundred years, it would be a disgrace to interdimensional travelers.

"Roasted lamp leg, you're in luck."

The elderly man sensed Jiang Chen's arrival. He didn't turn his head and smiled facing the bonfire.

Jiang Chen stood beside the old man and scanned the dried pine needles covering the ground.

"Are you not afraid of a forest fire?"

"It won't spread."

Perhaps because of his confidence in his roasting technique, the dried lips of the old man displayed a trace of confidence.

"Could I have a piece? Of course, I'll pay." Staring at the golden lamb leg, Jiang Chen's hunger intensified as he asked.

When he heard Jiang Chen's words, the old man's cloudy eyes were illuminated brightly like black pearls under a jumping flame. Jiang Chen couldn't explain why, but his gaze was like that of a hunter, but he wasn't staring at a sheep.

"If you want to eat it, just sit beside me. There's no need for money," the elderly man said before turning around.

Jiang Chen stared at the mud mixed with pine needles. He hesitated for a few seconds before crossing his legs and sitting down.

After about five minutes, the smell was just right as the elderly man skillfully sprayed salt and cumin on the lamb leg on the rack. Then he took out a small knife, took a few swings and handed the knife with the lamb meat to Jiang Chen.

"Try it."

Jiang Chen hesitantly put the knife tip up to his mouth, blew on it, took a bite, and his eyes instantly lit up.

"How does it taste?" The old man smiled.

"It's extraordinary." He handed the knife back to the elder and wiped his mouth with the back of his hand. He wasn't stingy with his praise.

The old man grinned and didn't respond to Jiang Chen's praise. He cut off a bigger piece of the lamb and handed it to him. Then he took out another knife and a bottle of alcohol.

"I already taught you how to cut the meat, now you can try yourself." The old man took a swig.

Jiang Chen, who had a stomach full of champagne, refused the alcohol the man passed over and instead feasted on the lamb leg. The two just sat in the forest without exchanging much conversation. They quietly enjoyed the delicious meat.

"Speaking of which, I think I met you this morning beside the lake," Jiang Chen abruptly said.

"Oh. I was chopping wood." The elder man smiled.

"That boat was built by you?" Jiang Chen put some meat into his mouth and swallowed it before he asked in a casual tone.

"Built the boat from the keel to sail - everything was completed by me." A proud smile appeared on the man's face as if he was bragging about something remarkable.

It was remarkable, even from Jiang Chen's perspective as an outsider.

"The Rothschild family didn't help you?" Jiang Chen realized the old man's status in the family must not be ordinary; starting a fire to roast meat was something normal servants would do.

But with the carefree appearance of the old man, it was hard for Jiang Chen to connect him with the Rothschild family. Just from

the impression Carmen left him, the family was probably critical of the appearance of courtesy.

"I told them not to help me."

"Sorry, but you are?"

The old man smiled while wiping the oily knife.

"Jacquardo Rothschild."

"... That's a thunderous name."

He was the former head of the Rothschild family. When Jiang Chen researched this financial family, he came across this name. This man was the legendary figure who led the Rothschild family out of the downfall of the Second World War, but history's description was overly brief.

Even his decision to pass the position of the head to his younger brother in order to live a life in seclusion in the Bava manor was only covered by a small column in the financial news.

"That's right. After retirement, I stopped using that name," Jacquardo said without much emotional fluctuation.

"Then what name do you use?"

"Paris." He dusted the dirt on his chin off as the bonfire lit up the smile on his face.

The name sounded familiar; it belonged to an ancient Greek mythology hero. He was the prince Zeus asked who the Golden Apple should be gifted to. His answer immediately caused the Trojan War.

Jiang Chen wanted to ask why he chose that name but resisted the urge.

If possible, he didn't want to associate himself with the Golden Apple again.

But the elder spoke out first.

"If you obtained the Golden Apple, who would you gift it to? Hera, Athena, or Aphrodite?"

It was a difficult question to answer.

Jiang Chen let out a sigh with his hand on his chin as he deliberated carefully for a while.

"This is a difficult question to answer. I pretty much have all the power and wealth I want. I don't seem to lack the intelligence and courage to start a hero's path. Perhaps I will gift it to Aphrodite? Since in this day and age, the more powerful and wealthy a person is, the further away they are from pure love. And a war comparable to the Trojan War wouldn't be too boring."

"Hahahaha." Jacquardo appeared to have heard something funny as he began to laugh.

His aged voice echoed in the forest.

Moments later, the pine forest returned to its tranquil state with only the sound of pine needles swaying.

"An interesting response. Although your choice was superficial, your justification was surprisingly fun."

To Jacquardo's comment, Jiang Chen only smiled nonchalantly then sent the question back in a half-joking tone.

"Then which god would you gift to, Mr. Paris?"

Jacquardo smiled. The wrinkles on his face squeezed together.

Under the glow of the fire, his smile looked somewhat menacing or barbaric.

"Regardless who I gifted it to, it would result in hell. So I would obviously keep it for myself."

Chapter 510: Auto Exhibition

On his trip back to the main building of the manor, Jiang Chen thought about Jacquardo's last sentence. When he asked Jacquardo how a peasant could use the Golden Apple, the man just smiled without replying.

The elder's response made Jiang Chen feel secretly relieved. Jacquardo's smile without a reply meant he viewed Jiang Chen as an "outsider." Hence, he thought Jiang Chen didn't know about the actual Golden Apple.

After finishing the entire roasted lamb leg, the elder extinguished the bonfire and buried the now-meatless carcass into the ground before departing. He picked up a backpack losing its color and headed to the wooden cabin beside the lake.

Perhaps his thoughts were somewhere else that time flew by as he realized he was now at the main building. When he arrived, Ccides was already waiting for him at the door.

"Did you see master?" When Jiang Chen stepped in front of him, the aged butler smiled courteously.

"How did you know?" Jiang Chen was curious.

"The pine needles on your shoulder and roasted lamb smell." Ccides smiled. "Master Carmen and I have been reminding Master Jacquardo to eat less oily food, but he never listens to us. Let's not talk about this. Please take your suit off - it is not the Rothschild way to allow our guests to have mud on their pants."

So, Jiang Chen took a shower. A maid brought him clean clothes and took his dirty ones to be washed.

After Jiang Chen returned to the room, Ayesha immediately came to check on him. Although she didn't speak, he guessed what she was going to say from her blue eyes that could speak.

"Don't worry. I just met an interesting person along the way and

took a bit longer than expected." Jiang Chen rubbed her luscious hair and told her what happened on his way back.

...

Ayesha adjusted Jiang Chen's collar and went up on her tiptoes to peck his lips. She looked him in the eyes and complained in a quiet voice, "Please don't eat food from strangers. If you're hungry, I can cook for you."

"Don't worry; if I was anywhere else, I'd be more careful." Jiang Chen laughed.

The Rothschilds wouldn't do anything low such as poisoning people. The more they were in a position of influence and power, the more they would be wary about their feathers. A large reason why the Rothschild family had their connections today was because of their way of treating guests.

Take a thousand steps back - even if someone wanted to poison him, normal poison would be useless on him.

"Mhmm," Ayesha replied quietly.

...

"Just today, renowned auto manufacturers from Europe and around the world gathered here." Walking inside the venue of the Ber Auto Exhibition, Carmen energetically told Jiang Chen, "This is the Maybach EX our company recently launched. There are only five units available, and one of them belongs to you."

Carmen smiled at Jiang Chen.

Maybach EX, with 5 models in production, was expected to sell for 4.2 million euros, equivalent to 28.66 million RMB. Based on their estimates, if he delivered the smart driving system before May, he would be gifted a unit.

The black exterior cast an obsidian-like shine; the sleek design made the car look ferocious just from the appearance. Especially

with a model beside the car, her gorgeous black dress and elegant appearance accentuated the Maybach EX's noble and mysterious temperament to create the most vivid perfection.

"The model is not included. But with your wealth, it shouldn't be too difficult to bring her home with you." Perhaps Carmen noticed Jiang Chen's gaze, so he used a half-joking voice.

Seeing Carmen and Jiang Chen walking together, the reporters immediately raised their cameras and captured a moment in their friendly conversation. Artificial intelligence always left people imaginative, and their imagination would usually be reflected in the stock price of the company.

"Speaking of which, what's the theme of the exhibition?" Jiang Chen asked nonchalantly while scanning the unique-looking supercars around the venue.

"New energy and the future," Carmen said.

"The future? That's a deep theme." Jiang Chen noticed a car with a design similar to a car wheel. What drew his attention wasn't its design but that fact that it hovered half a meter above the ground.

"The same as your company?" Carmen joked.

"Maglev vehicle?" Jiang Chen gently touched the surface of the car as he entered deep thought.

"This is only a concept vehicle. Dalmer created something similar before, but we don't think the future is too bright for this design due to difficulties in actual implementation. This vehicle could only be used on roads integrated with maglev tracks. And this kind of maglev road is ten thousand Euros per meter."

[Ten thousand Euros...]

Jiang Chen made a crude estimate before a wry smile appeared on his face.

Considering the complicated highway system in Europe, it was

indeed an astronomical number. But regarding the technical challenges faced by maglev vehicles, Jiang Chen personally didn't feel they were major since the Sixth Street Inner Circle was in the process of tackling those at the moment. With the way the speed of construction was moving, the costs wouldn't be too high.

"I have to visit the Dalmer Corporation venue in a bit; just find me there when the time is right. Before meeting with the annoying reporters, I suggest you take a walk around first." Carmen smiled.

"Go ahead."

After separating from Carmen, Jiang Chen continued to follow the signs at the venue. Along the way, his eyes were treated well. In order to attract the interest of potential investors, major auto companies dedicated much effort to the exhibition by showing beautiful showgirls as a secondary competition.

Aside from the major auto manufacturers, a lot of smaller companies came with their best efforts. If they could attract the interest of major capitals, they could avoid dealing with the plague-like venture capitalists and bankers.

The more isolated the venue, the fewer the people, and the plague on the exhibition changed into more unknown manufacturers. Although the auto industry had relatively restricted entry, it didn't prevent smaller companies without any decent products to participate in the exhibition.

Just then, at the corner of the venue, an ordinary-looking exhibition captured the attention of Jiang Chen. It wasn't because of how attractive the car looked, nor how powerful the vehicle claimed to be, but it was because...

Jiang Chen walked up and scanned the name.

A brand Jiang Chen never heard about. He was skeptical if Ruhrka even had a car manufacturing plant.

Just as Jiang Chen examined their exhibition, Ruhrka was also

looking at him anxiously. Before the exhibition, he did his homework. It was a far stretch to say he knew all the invited guests, but at least he could easily recognize the one-hundred guests emphasized by the media.

Not to mention a famous individual like Jiang Chen.

To be frank, he almost lost all hope with the lack of visitors at his exhibition. In the beginning, he convinced himself that it was because visitors didn't want to walk there. But after an hour, he gave up this futile self-comfort and let his employees go home first.

Since overtime was expensive for him.

But he didn't think his company would attract Jiang Chen's attention!

Due to his own nervousness, the sales pitch he prepared beforehand completely disappeared from his head.

Just as he was about to introduce his own product, Jiang Chen spoke first.

"Your booth... doesn't even have a showgirl?"

Chapter 511: Financing Proposal

Hearing Jiang Chen's words, Luer was speechless. He didn't think that it was because of this reason Jiang Chen noticed his booth.

"...Sorry."

Luer's honesty made Jiang Chen feel peculiar. Although he expected the company to be in a difficult situation, he didn't expect them to be this bad.

"Electric vehicle? But I feel like there is nothing special comparing your vehicle with the other electric vehicles."

When Jiang Chen mentioned his product, Luer was immediately energized.

"No, Mr. Jiang Chen, you didn't get to know about the uniqueness of our product. We used wireless charging technology to replace the need to have a charging port. Therefore, the car owner just needs to park the vehicle on the charging lot to complete the charging process."

"So you're saying, if you're compared to a phone manufacturer, the relative advantage of your phone is just that charging doesn't require a cable?" Jiang Chen mocked.

Although he didn't have a deep understanding of the automotive industry, he still knew a bit about pure electric vehicles. No other reason other than the fact that the apocalypse only had electric vehicles. Fossil fuel vehicles will be eliminated with historical inevitability, just as the original coal burners.

The technical challenges of the modern day were the distance and charging time.

Let's first start with distance. Under the ideal setting at a steady speed of 30 kilometers per hour, it is hard for a pure electric vehicle to achieve 300 kilometers of distance. The short distance would no doubt bring extreme inconvenience to the owners and

the limiting factor of the electric vehicle's wide adoption.

The other problem was charging time. Typically, a pure electric vehicle's charge time is between 7-8 hours. Although the widely used Lithium iron carbonate battery possesses a half hour charge function, the high power charging severely affects the car's battery life, especially due to the heat generated. But during a long trip, the owner would not wait for 7-8 hours before the battery is charged again.

For a lot of short-tempered people, half an hour of charge time was already too dreadful.

But Luer's technology tree was skewed. It didn't make any progress on the technical challenges but rather specialized in wireless charging technology. The lenient view would be foresight; the harsher version would be running without learning how to walk first.

But because of this, the concept car they introduced drew Jiang Chen's attention, because the charging station at the apocalypse happened to use wireless charging technology. The owner would only need to drive the car to the specific lot, and then log into a mobile electronic device or the vehicle computer to start the charging service.

Convenience was the advantage of wireless charging.

Luer's expression immediately turned awkward when he heard Jiang Chen's ridicule.

"Did you not consider the energy lost in the process? I don't really know cars that well, but just making a comparison to the phone industry, based on the current phone wireless charging technology, the ideal energy lost is at 30%." Jiang Chen smiled and continued.

Luer was immediately unhappy seeing Jiang Chen berate his proud work and rebuked.

"That's not completely right, the lithium battery our company designed can shorten the charging time to 15 minutes! And it doesn't reduce the battery's life."

15 minutes?

It was an incredible achievement; Jiang Chen was surprised.

"Oh? How did you do it?"

To Jiang Chen question, Luer was silent.

Seeing he didn't speak, Jiang Chen had an idea in his mind. Silence meant that either his solution didn't include advanced technology, or it was not technically difficult to achieve. If it were hard to mimic, then he wouldn't be silent.

"Mr. Luer, if you can't satisfy my curiosity, how do you expect me to be willing to pay for your product?" Jiang Chen said softly.

"You're willing to invest in us?" Luer was astonished.

"If your product can interest me." Jiang Chen used a nonchalant tone.

"Okay, to be honest, although we have twelve patents on the vehicle, the most critical innovation was rejected by the patent office. The rejection reason was simple: you can't register using a series of lithium batteries as a patent... Uh, you should understand now."

With the realization on Jiang Chen's face, Luer shrugged.

"That's right, I have to say, your solution is quite... innovative." Jiang Chen facepalmed.

Yes, he understood Ruhrka's solution, it was to connect multiple lithium batteries together and then attach a charging module on each battery. Because it was wireless charging technology, the charging station could conveniently charge multiple lithium batteries together. While this way could certainly shorten charging time, the disadvantages were too obvious to ridicule.

"... But did you consider the problem of cost? The size of the batteries, and attaching the charging module to each battery." Jiang Chen continued to ask.

When Jiang Chen mentioned this problem, proudness appeared on Luer's face, "I have to mention the KS-12 Series battery our company designed. It is the core of the technology of the vehicle! It is formed by eight independent lithium battery units capable of storing a total of 40 volts of power with a distance of more than 180 kilometers!"

The stat was mediocre compared to the other electric vehicles on the market, but the wireless charging and fast charging certainly could add a few points.

But Luer didn't mention the most critical problem, the cost.

"What about cost?" Jiang Chen repeated the most fundamental question.

Luer's expression turned awkward again as he dodged Jiang Chen's eyes.

"Of course, the cost is a problem, but our technical experts have brought about an improvement plan. If we could acquire an investment, we have the confidence to reduce the cost to a reasonable range."

When Jiang Chen heard this, an intrigued expression appeared on Jiang Chen's face.

Typically speaking, the price of an electric vehicle is two times the cost of a diesel vehicle. From Ruhrka's expression, the cost of the vehicle must be remarkably high.

"Can I ask the price of the vehicle?"

Luer hesitated for a moment before he answered, with honesty, "If manufactured at scale, the cost is 700,000 USD."

"How many people do you think will foot the bill for this car?"

Jiang Chen smiled.

Luer forced a smile." Mr. Jiang Chen, if you are just here to make fun of me after chatting for so long, you have achieved your goal."

"Then you have to be disappointed because I'm not here to make fun of you. Instead, I'm interested in your company... or technology per say." Jiang Chen paused, and handed over his business card, "Are you interested in an equity infusion of 100 million USD?"

Chapter 512: Investing in Electric Vehicles

When Luer reminisces about this day many years later, he wouldn't know what kind of emotion he had. He could only remember with certainty that his hands were shaking when he took the business card. It felt like he was not holding a gold-gilded business card, but a couple of tons of gold...

Jiang Chen demanded 80% shares. It was not an unreasonable request. Currently, Luer Auto Company didn't even have their own car plant. The only source of income was from the France Government's New Energy Vehicle Project Special Funding, and the only things worth money were the series of batteries along with the eleven patents and a few blueprints that could acquire more funding. Finally, there were the ten technical experts that Luer almost couldn't pay anymore.

100 million USD of equity infusion was nothing for Jiang Chen and nothing for the automakers with billions in market cap, but to Luer's company on the brink of bankruptcy, it was timely.

"Don't rush to build a plant yet. I need you to focus your research on the development of the KS-12 Series Battery in improving the performance of the pure electric vehicle, as well as the compatibility with the wireless charged battery."

"But with this money, we can improve the storage capacity of the battery and the charging speed. These are key for an electric vehicle." Luer was a bright individual. Although the wireless charging concept was too forward for the era, it was based out of the consideration of charging speed.

"We'll solve the battery problem. The specifications of the battery will be sent to you a week later." Jiang Chen smiled.

What made Luer the most confused was what Jiang Chen saw in his company? But since Jiang Chen didn't say anything, he didn't ask.

After departing with Luer, Jiang Chen took a few more rounds around the venue. The booths he focused on were all unique; the types of companies with unique technologies but not favored by the market.

These types of companies shared a similar trait which was poor financial condition. Their president or chief engineer manned the booths. When Jiang Chen threw out stacks of cash as bait and asked for a significant chunk of the shares. The presidents handed their shares with both hands willingly while chuckling in their mind.

Of course, people rejected Jiang Chen's offer. To those people, Jiang Chen's action was straightforward.

Turn around and leave.

There were too many manufacturers attending this exhibition, regardless of technical expertise, as long as they met the requirement for new energy, they could register or be invited to the exhibition. If you don't want to sell, there were plenty of people desperate to sell.

For a total of 500 million, Jiang Chen acquired France's Luer, Finsai, and Frankberg's Leon with a controlling share of 80%, 85%, and 75% respectively. Jiang Chen purchased the three companies with his own money and not Future Group's balance sheet. So on the share transfer agreement, he signed his name.

When he returned to Xin, he planned to register a new subsidiary under Future Group with the name Future Heavy Industries. The first order would be the electric vehicle battery used in wireless charging equipment. And the three auto companies he purchased, they'll use Future Heavy Industries' battery as the core component to produce electric vehicles.

Jiang Chen thought about vertically integrating the entire vehicle production line, but he abandoned the idea.

Reason baring none other than it was necessary.

The battery was the core of the electric vehicle, and even more significant than the engine. This point was completely contrary to the diesel vehicle where the engine was significantly more crucial than the gas tank.

The top company establishes the standard; the second tier company produces the product. Future Group just needed to be the company that created the standard. It was not worth the risk to be investigated for having a monopoly by integrating the entire production line.

Establishing the three companies to be the leader in the electric vehicle field, and Future Heavy Industries's high-efficiency battery would be pushed into the market. When all the clients were used to the convenient and fast wireless charging electric vehicles, the charging station and parking lot would then be paired with Future Heavy Industries' charging equipment.

By then, Future Heavy Industries would be the standard.

Of course, it was easy to say, the actual implementation would require additional research.

When the exhibition was halfway done, Jiang Chen returned to Daimler's area.

Carmen warmly introduced Jiang Chen to his business partners, including the Gulfstream Europe's Area's manager, Andy Belfort. With a price of 65 million USD, Jiang Chen purchased the newest model of G650 without much deliberation.

In the flashes of the reporters, Daimler's CEO Zetsche took Jiang Chen's hand and personally gave him the key to the Maybach EX.

It represented the friendship between Future Group and Daimler Corporation.

For Jiang Chen, he only took some photos to obtain a globally limited luxury car.

For Daimler, they only paid a price of 4.2 million Euros in exchange for their stock price rising by 4%. Investors certainly had complete confidence in Future Technology' artificial intelligence technology.

Even if he had a better ride, Jiang Chen still loved the gift. Since a car not only represented a transportation method, it was also a symbol of power and influence. He won't drive the car often, but it was not a bad addition to his collection in the garage.

Daimler Group arranged for the delivery of the vehicle to Xin's Coro Airport. Once Jiang Chen stepped out of the plane in Xin, the car would be ready for him on the runway.

He spoke a few words about artificial intelligence in front of the media and didn't stay in the venue much longer before leaving through the private tunnel.

He avoided the media at the gate and entered the black vehicle Carmen provided him. When he got in, Ayesha started the car.

"Where are we going?"

"University of Ber."

Ayesha nodded and stepped on the gas.

In a small black female suit, the shades certainly matched well. It gave the beautiful Ayesha holding the wheel a bit more of a glamorous charm.

Jiang Chen flipped through the business cards in his hands and went through his schedule for the day in his head. Because he left the exhibition earlier, he planned to head to the University of Ber along the way before returning to the manor in Bava.

He wanted to see Xie Lei since he was considered the guardian for the brother and sister.

On the other hand, Jiang Chen wanted Xie Lei to find some mechanical engineering talents. Since Frankberg's manufacture

and technology level was without a doubt the leader of the world. It was meaningful to recruit a research team that could strengthen Future Group to digest the technology from the apocalypse,

And for the students that just graduated university, their ability to accept new knowledge was without a doubt, and their cost to recruit would be lower compared to engineers that already signed with other companies.

Future Group would provide the benefits impossible to refuse, in housing, salary, and other benefits as long as they accepted the condition of immigration.

The car entered the University of Ber.

Jiang Chen asked Ayesha to slow down and awed at the world-renowned education institution before he located the closest library on the GPS.

On the phone, Jiang Chen told Xie Lei to him meet there.

Chapter 513: Long time no see

"Long time no see."

"Indeed, long time no see. Do you want a cup of coffee?"

"No need, I just want to take a look."

University of Ber's library environment was elegant. Quite a number of students were studying around the tables, but the library was quiet. Jiang Chen was standing beside a bookshelf and opened an astronomy book with pictures.

Because Xie Lei was still in class, he waited for a bit.

And at that time, a book caught his attention.

Precisely, a picture caught his attention.

"How's the life in Frankberg?" To avoid disturbing other people, Jiang Chen tried to lower his tone.

"We're living a great life. Xie Lin's eyes have almost recovered; the hospital said they still need to observe for a few more days. I told her when she is discharged from the hospital, I will take her to New Swan Berg... Thank you."

Compared to the teen with a pale face and skinny to the point where a gust of wind could blow him away, he was much taller and gained the liveness that belonged to his age.

Whether it was his growth or the genuine gratitude from his eyes, Jiang Chen was extremely pleased.

It meant that his investment was not wasted.

Helping the brother and sister was one of the few philanthropic things he did.

"You don't need to thank me," Jiang Chen's eyes didn't leave the book while he whispered.

"Are you interested in astronomy?"

"Aerospace is within my investment interest, but I don't have too particular of an interest in astronomy... Or rather, I'm just interested in a particular planet." His thumb gently rubbed on the dark red planet.

It was different from the spherical body with one side green and one red side in his "dream". This planet was "dead."

"Which one?"

"Gliese 581, 20.5 lightyears away from the solar system."

Whenever he saw the planet, Jiang Chen had the powerless feeling where he was doing futile work. Facing the battle-tested Harmony civilization that spent thousands of years in wars, even with the wrap engine paper, he still didn't have strong odds of winning.

If this world was destined for destruction, then Future Group and Celestial Trade would be pointless.

Of course, as long as a sliver of hope remained, he would not spell defeat.

Xie Lei searched for a while in his mind, but he didn't have any impression of the name.

"Is this photo captured from a telescope?" Jiang Chen asked seemingly without common sense.

"How is that possible... Although the Hubble Telescope could capture planets hundreds of lightyears away, it would be impossible to capture the direct image of the planet. Some of the stars' brightness is dim, and the brighter stars directly cover some. Most of the extrasolar planets are analyzed according to the spectrum and other information to obtain the planetary environment, and then the planetary images are produced."

"Is that so?... I didn't think you are so knowledgeable in this field."

\[The war is half lost if there is no information about the invader, looks like it is time to find a more advanced telescope.\]

"My senior sister is part of the astronomy club," Xie Lei said.

Jiang Chen looked at him in surprise.

"I noticed from before, but you seem to be very popular."

Xie Lei paused before he scratched his face, feeling shy.

"Is it?"

"How's your personal network in the university?"

"It's okay."

"I need some help."

"No problem," Xie Lei answered sternly.

"Don't be so nervous. It is nothing dangerous this time." Jiang Chen closed the book, stuffed it back onto the shelf, and handed him a piece of paper.

"This is?" Xie Lei looked at the paper in confusion.

"Help me find some talent."

"Mechanical, automation, electrical, nanotechnology, information technology... there are so many fields. Why don't you just hire on campus?"

"Because I'm not hiring them into a formal position. This is only a talent reserve or an investment in science. I require that the person must be moral and trustworthy, and must be interested in new technology with a strong ability to absorb knowledge... That's about it. You should know what type of people I'm looking for," Jiang Chen said to Xie Lei.

Although Xie Lei was not too clear, he still nodded. "Leave it up to me."

"I know the requirements may be strict, but I also believe that you can overcome difficulties. Participate in events, get on the

good side of your classmates, understand the type of person they are, also it would be best if you become part of the student council. Study how to treat interpersonal relationships. I sent you to university not only for you to learn about computers."

Jiang Chen then patted Xie Lei on the shoulder, "I believe in you."

Xie Lei looked at him blankly.

"Are there any other questions?"

"Nothing... I just feel that you act like a father..." Xie Lei scratched his face.

Jiang Chen took a second to process this before he cursed out, "What are you even thinking, I didn't—"

"Please keep quiet in the library."

The librarian that appeared out of nowhere stared at Jiang Chen emotionlessly and spoke word by word in Han.

...

After being kicked out by the somewhat unreasonable librarian, Jiang Chen's had a dumbfounded expression on his face. The good thing was there were no reporters hidden nearby, or he would be headline material again.

Fortunately, because there were bookshelves on both sides, no one noticed him when he left the library's second floor.

"Do you want to go to the coffee shop on the floor above? We can chat freely there."

"No need, I should head out soon. You can go work on your own things now. Just remember the task I gave you. You have plenty of time to complete this. As to the necessary funding, just give me a number through text."

"It's just making friends, does this mission need money?" Xie Lei looked at Jiang Chen.

"Money can win over people; it can also make people forget themselves."

Jiang Chen left with words with deep meanings. Encouragingly he patted Xie Lei on the shoulder and said goodbye to the teen.

When Jiang Chen left the library from the side door, he noticed quite a few students were looking at him. Although Europeans couldn't distinguish Asians quite well, because of his recent publicity, a number of them recognized him.

A female student even courageous walked up to ask for a selfie to upload onto Twitter.

Jiang Chen couldn't resist her energy and satisfied the wish of the fan and forced a smile at the camera. Just as she was sending the twitter in excitement, Jiang Chen didn't stop long and headed to the garage of the library.

"Go back to the manor."

"Mhmm." Ayesha nodded and started the car.

Ber was the capital of the state of Bava, but the Rothschild manor was located in the rural area to the east. When they returned, it was already dark. Ccides ordered the kitchen to prepare food for them.

Perhaps because they knew that Jiang Chen would depart the day after tomorrow, the food the kitchen prepared was extravagant.

With the majority of his day spent outside and a tableful of food, Jiang Chen was prepared to feast.

After dinner, Jiang Chen took a bath and then returned to the bedroom.

After attending the exhibition, the primary purpose of the Frankberg trip was achieved. Based on his plan, he will take Ayesha for a tour of Ber; the perfect conclusion to the trip.

Since he was tired and wanted to wake up on time, Jiang Chen

went to bed early.

But just as he was about to doze off, his phone began to ring.

He picked up the phone and first glanced at the time.

It was already nine at night, who would call him?

Unknown Caller.

Hesitating, Jiang Chen pressed the pickup button.

Chapter 514: For the Country

Bava is one of the larger states in Frankberg, the state capital's Ber's political and economic status was only second to the capital of Frankberg. Its basic infrastructure and educational resources are among the frontier in Europe. The Ber Industrial University and other top education institutions are among the top destinations for international students.

Among the individual circles among international student, the Hua international students were among the biggest and the most united among the other organizations. With the Hua Student Organization as the biggest among the universities, it even posed an influence onto the Hua circle in Frankberg.

When the Student Organization Leader Chen Yuqiao saw Jiang Chen was invited by Daimler Corporation to participate in the Ber Auto Exhibition on October 31st, she immediately had an idea. It was the perfect opportunity as the organization was planning an university level student event. If they could invite the "Oriental Bill Gates" to speak a few words, it would be a huge boost to the organization among international students and even to those outside of the sphere of influence.

At the same time, as the leader of the organization, it would be a prominent experience on her resume.

Other than that, she still had other plans. She studied Economics and International Trades at the University of Ber. Her grades were exception enough to work in Frankberg, but due to the economic downturn in Europe, she was not pleased with the salaries with the companies she contacted. As someone heading into fourth year, she needed a plan for her future.

Future Technology was expanding its international presence. The investors were not the only ones who were confident with Future Group's future, job seekers with foresight were also

confident. If she could demonstrate her organization ability in front of Future Group's president, it would indeed be an option in her future job searching.

But what troubled her was how to contact Jiang Chen.

Until a twitter from her friend caught her attention.

It was a selfie. The background of the selfie was the side door of the university library. The man on the phone was exactly Jiang Chen, and that student happened to take on a role in the student union. Since the student union had a friendly relationship with the student organization, she followed her twitter.

What a coincidence!

When she saw the twitter, she immediately rushed to the library and asked the librarian if she had seen Jiang Chen. Unfortunately, the fifty years old librarian didn't follow anything else other than the library itself, so she had no impression of the name Jiang Chen. But when she showed the photo on Twitter, the librarian immediately realized.

It was the guy that got kicked up because of excessive noise in the library.

Although Chen Yuqiao was dumbfounded by the fact the librarian kicked Jiang Chen out, she still patiently inquired about the situation from the stubborn elder.

When she heard that a male student met with Jiang Chen, she immediately used her relationship in the student body to obtain video footage to determine that the male student's name was Xie Lei.

Xie Lei seemed to rarely participate in student organization events, so his name didn't appear in the student organization's list. But it was okay; she somehow obtained his contact information from the student union.

Although she knew it may be too intrusive, she gritted her teeth

and called the number on the guardian information.

"Hello?" Jiang Chen picked up the phone.

"Hello, are you Mr. Jiang Chen?" Chen Yuqiao tried her best not to sound nervous.

"That's right. And you are?" A young voice that Jiang Chen had no impression of.

When she received the affirmative answer, she was ecstatic.

"My name is Chen Yuqiao, the leader of the Han Student Organization..."

Chen Yuqiao politely explained that she wished to invite Jiang Chen as a special guest to give a speech at the international student gala for a few words on artificial intelligence, virtual reality, or the industry's future.

Although she practiced multiple times in front of the mirror, Chen Yuqiao still felt anxious. On the other side of the phone was the owner of a one hundred billion dollar tech company and his investment stretched beyond the border of the internet, from nutrient supply to deep water mining, the footsteps of Future Group spanned through different industries.

But Jiang Chen's response exhilarated her.

"My flight is the day after tomorrow in the afternoon, is tomorrow night okay?"

"No problem! We'll adjust our time accordingly, thank you so much!" Chen Yuqiao couldn't stop thanking him over the phone.

Jiang Chen only smiled.

Since he had no specific plans for the entire day tomorrow, there was nothing wrong with participating in the international student gala. Especially a speech given by the Future Group's president at a top education institution would increase Future Group's influence among the students. Future Group's future employees will be

hidden amongst them.

"No need, but don't have your hopes too high. I'm just here to say a few words."

"It is our honor for you to be here!"

After hanging up the phone, Chen Yuqiao was relieved.

"He agreed?" Although the response on the leader's face already told him the answer, the vice president on the side still asked to confirm.

"Mhmm, it's done!" She restricted the excitement in her mind and blissfully nodded.

"Qu Youcheng, contact the sponsors and school media and push forward the date of the gala to tomorrow night."

"Do we have time? The venue is not prepared yet." Qu Youcheng was troubled.

"Then prepare it."

Jiang Chen didn't mind the intrusive invitation and the fact that he took time out of his busy schedule to attend the gala was already very nice of him.

"Li Wei, you're responsible for contacting the school and changing the lecture hall reservation to the grass field in front of the West Church."

"Would the school agree?"

"They will," Chen Yuqiao said with certainty.

Li Wei nodded and rushed out. She remembered the professor responsible for this location reservation had a class that night and his research happened to be in artificial intelligence. If they invited Jiang Chen to give a speech at the gala, changing the location would not be difficult at all.

Perhaps the professor would attend the "lecture" himself.

Just as the student organization was busy preparing for the gala, a protest erupted in front of the Ber Opera two streets down from the Industrial University of Ber. But in the country where protests were common, it was an ordinary scene.

People raised the photo of the women that died of r*pe because of the refugees over the past half a year and marched along the road in front of the opera. They chanted to deport the refugees and protested against the wrongful decisions made by the government.

The people willing to help had an accepting attitude half a year ago since it was easy for St. Mary to be born from a high benefit society. The people at the start pressed the government to push out policies to accept the poor people into the wall and protested the hanging of pig heads on the neighboring countries' border.

Just in half a year of time, they tasted their own medicine.

With the benefits diluted, the crime rate skyrocketing, and the drop in the employment rate, what would a bunch of poor people with nothing to do do together? Especially outside of the wall, it was the prosperous world.

"Make them go back to their own country! Frankberg is not the welfare home of the world!"

"Get out of Frankberg!"

"They must pay for the people that died."

The protestors gathered steam, but they were rather peaceful. The police in bulletproof vest only stood on the side and watched the protestors from afar. Tomorrow, the Frankberg President would head to the opera with the Austria President. Maximum security was enacted around the opera.

The police didn't disperse the protestors to prevent accidents from occurring to interfere with the event tomorrow. As long as they didn't approach the opera, as long as the protestors maintained rationality...

Among the crowd, two young males stood together.

"Is it time?"

"It is time."

A hooked nose male solemnly stared at the name of the deceased as he pulled up the scarf around his neck.

"For Frankberg."

He left the words to his buddy, turned around, and disappeared into the crowd.

His friend gazed at his back.

"For Frankberg."

Chapter 515: Actors are ready

The next morning, after Jiang Chen and Ayesha had breakfast in the dining room, they went to the garage. They had a free day today as Jiang Chen wanted to take the girl for a tour around Ber, and then attend the gala at night at the university.

Ayesha had been preparing for this date last night. After waking up, she tried on a few different sets of clothes before finally choosing a black cotton dress and high bottom boots. She also put on light makeup to complete her ensemble.

Because it was personal time, Jiang Chen's style was casual. He put on a grey trench coat outside of his shirt before leaving while holding her hand.

On the way to the garage, they bumped into Carmen in surprise as he was chatting with a man in a brown jacket. The reason why he was surprised because he remembered Carmen didn't live in the manor.

They quickly ended the conversation as the unfamiliar man briskly left. Just before he turned around, he noticed Jiang Chen and Ayesha, but his eyes just stopped on Jiang Chen for a second before he left.

Although it was a glance, Jiang Chen felt something that made him feel uncomfortable.

He smelled chaos.

When Carmen saw Jiang Chen, his eyes lit up, and he walked up with a smile.

"Are you planning to leave?"

"Mhmm, we are planning to take a tour around the city since we're departing tomorrow." Jiang Chen smiled.

"Your flight tomorrow is... when?"

"Nine in the morning, is there something wrong?"

"Of course not. I hope you have fun here." Carmen smiled, paused, and then he added, "Don't come back too late."

Without too many more words, Carmen stated that he still had things to take care, so they parted ways.

"Slavic," Just then, Ayesha abruptly said.

"Mhmm?" Jiang Chen was confused.

"That man just then is a mercenary— Mhmm?"

Ayesha didn't finish speaking yet before Jiang Chen put his hand on her head.

With her face turning red, she looked at Jiang Chen, puzzled.

"Don't overthink today, it's rare for us to go on a tour." Jiang Chen gently rubbed her hair.

Feeling the warmth on her head, Ayesha shyly buried her head.

The Rothschild family was obviously planning something, but it shouldn't be targeted toward him. The more powerful, the warier of their feathers. Disregarding the fact that Jiang Chen reached an agreement with Luke, even if Jiang Chen made up his mind to stand on the opposing side against Vale, BHP, and other metal giants, they wouldn't take any actions in Frankberg.

Since it had nothing to do with him, he didn't need to mind that much.

But Carmen's don't come back too late was worth pondering.

Would something happen at night?

...

Compared to the prosperity days earlier, the streets of Ber were particularly quiet today. It was daytime, but there were only a few pedestrians. While all the stores were open, there was rarely a soul inside. It was not until they approached the city center did the

situation change.

Jiang Chen parked the car in the parking lot at the entrance of the pedestrian street and took Ayesha's hand before he smelt something odd. But when he thought that he was going to leave tomorrow, he didn't think too much of it.

The solemnness lingering on the street didn't influence the two's date. Ayesha held Jiang Chen's arm along the way. From the smile on her face, Jiang Chen could see she was happy. They spent the entire morning walking among the malls in Ber while buying bags and bags of clothes.

As to the language barrier, it was nothing to worry about, Jiang Chen's phone was installed with a real-time translation software.

At noon, Jiang Chen took Ayesha to a randomly selected restaurant, sat near the window, and ordered two steaks and drinks. The violin in the restaurant was graceful, perhaps because of the ambiance, Ayesha was particularly timid. The two enjoyed lunch while they chatted about their plans for the afternoon.

Just as they were halfway through their lunch, two men sat down at a table near them. From their appearance, they looked like employees from the nearby office buildings. When Jiang Chen heard their conversation, Jiang Chen finally learned that an anti-refugee protest erupted in front of the Ber Opera.

"The days won't be too peaceful."

"Yes." A man in buzzcut sighed.

"What ended up happening in the protest yesterday?"

"The mayor said that he would pressure the council to pass the bill to restrict the intake of refugees. He said this last month, but what was the result?"

"The damn humanitarianism... Why don't these locusts go to other countries? Fu*k..."

Jiang Chen pressed the phone screen and closed the translation software's flashing words; then he looked worriedly at Ayesha. Seeing that she didn't look too upset, he was more relieved.

"It's okay." Ayesha sensed the care in Jiang Chen's eyes and gently smiled.

"Is it really okay?"

"Mhmm." Ayesha nodded and used the fork in her hand to play with a small tomato.

"Because it's something without a solution."

...

The dusk started to fade and night began to settle. A golden layer gilded the dome of the opera. The protestors with signs marched forward. Yesterday's protest was just a warning and today was the main event. If the current regime continued to use their ambiguity, the Bava citizens would use action to tell the federal council about their dissatisfaction with their decision.

Today was the day of the Frankberg president and Austria president's diplomatic meeting.

Even for the powerful, they still needed to do something to assure the public opinion out of consideration of their political status.

But the protestors clearly wrongfully estimated the situation, not everyone was extreme, or with "foresight." The protestors in front of the opera accounted for less than 1% of the Ber citizens. At least for now, the Social Justice Warriors had the upper advantage as more people felt compassionate toward the refugees than the people that disdained them.

Before the fleet of the two presidents arrived, the fully equipped police force used tear bomb to "peacefully" disperse the protestors, captured the leaders, and the mayhem quickly concluded. To ensure safety, Frankberg even mobilized its military force to

maintain order.

Not even a fly could fly inside the opera.

Quickly, ten black cars stopped in front of the opera. A man with a triangular face and a skinny man walked out simultaneously from two of the cars. With the crowd of reporters, they shook hands and walked into the opera while chatting.

Frankberg President Yosim Gunde and Austria President Haingzi. Behind the two was the Frankberg Deputy Prime Minister and Federal Minister of Economy and Energy Evelyn, as well as the Austria Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance.

Such a high standard of the meeting was the first this year between the two governments. In the afternoon, the two sides have reached a consensus on economic cooperation and the growing refugee problem. And tonight they will watch the opera performances with the audience with the purpose to consolidate the diplomatic results in the afternoon.

At the same time, three streets down in the Empire Hotel, Carmen stood in front of the French window in the presidential suite on the top floor. He gazed at the golden dome of the opera with a glass of wine in hand.

The door behind him opened and Johnson walked up to him.

"The actors are ready."

A curvature appeared on Carmen's lips.

"Perfect. Then... let the performance begin."

He raised the hand with wine and gently toasted the reflection of the opera in the window

Chapter 516: The Show has Begun

The opera house was full of people in addition to the two presidents and government officials; Frankberg citizens and invited business elites were among the people attending the show. Sitting in a VIP booth, Sim Gorde looked at the packed crowd below him. He couldn't help but smile.

Frankberg was a parliamentary system; although the federal President represented Frankberg internally and externally, the real power was in the parliament and appointed Prime Minister. The main duties of the President in the House were only to sign and publish the bills passed by the parliament as well as the laws and regulations signed by the Federal Minister, but he had no veto power. The Prime Minister was the head of state, but he was only a representative figure.

Even the President only really tasted power during diplomatic meetings.

The light illuminated the opera house. The baton swayed as harmonious music drifted down from the stage with the audience immersed in the melody. The performance today was from the world famous Mino Orchestra from Vienna.

The deputy Prime Minister, Evelyn Gillwick, was sitting behind Sim. He looked up at the clock on the wall, pulled the tie around his collar, and moved closer to the President's ear.

"Mr. Sim, I have another commitment in a bit - is it okay if I leave you here alone?"

...

Sim's eyebrows furrowed as the act of being excluded from formal functions made him extremely displeased.

"A commitment? What kind of commitment? How come I don't know about this?"

"It's a private function. My alma mater is hosting a seminar and I reserved front row seats."

When Sim heard it was a private function, Sim's eyebrows were no longer furrowed. He gently coughed and took on the role of a President.

"You can go; just leave this place to me."

Evelyn expressed his apologies to the Austrian President and Deputy Prime Minister then immediately departed. The moment he stepped out of the opera, he felt relieved.

"To the University of Ber. Quick, the gala will start in ten minutes." Evelyn scanned the security in the area as he instructed his assistant.

...

Outside the University of Ber church, it was packed with people. Although it was a Han student gala, when people heard that the chief designer of Future 1.0 and president of Future Group, Jiang Chen, would attend the gala and deliver a speech during the opening ceremony, people other than students showed up.

"Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to attend this gala out of such a sudden request. We didn't think so many people would show up." Inside the small church, Chen Yuqiao kept thanking Jiang Chen.

"No worries - it was my honor to receive your invitation." Jiang Chen smiled.

When Chen Yuqiao received Jiang Chen's affirmation, a relieved smile appeared on her face.

With a large crowd outside the church, Ayesha looked tensed.

"Do we not need to worry about security concerns? What if—"

"No need to worry." Jiang Chen tried to comfort the worried Ayesha.

The four Celestial Trades bodyguards were already stationed at the four corners of the venue. Jiang Chen was wearing a carbon Nano bulletproof vest on him and Ayesha was with him as backup; he wasn't worried at all.

The church bell rang and struck six o'clock.

The members of the student organization, school officials, and special guest, Jiang Chen, all entered the venue. The MC introduced a few things before immediately handing the microphone to Jiang Chen.

With microphone in hand, Jiang Chen calmly stepped onto the stage.

He faced a similar situation countless times already, so having a larger audience wouldn't affect his state of mind.

"I'm surprised there are so many of you in the audience; I thought I would only have to say a few things in order to meet the demands of your student leader, but now I have to be more serious."

As Jiang Chen spoke, he jokingly made a funny face.

He waited for a moment for the friendly laughter and clapping to die down before he continued.

"All of your academic qualifications are probably higher than mine, not to mention your professional knowledge. Your professor Graeme knows much more than I do, and many of your classmates' grades are still in his hands."

Hearing Jiang Chen mention his name, Professor Graeme cast a surprised expression then gave Jiang Chen a friendly smile. It was a consensus that Future Technology replaced IBM as the leader in artificial intelligence application. For Professor Graeme to be recognized by the chief designer of Future 1.0 was a demonstration of his abilities.

"Then we'll talk about something that concerns all of you-" Jiang

Chen paused to build up suspense then he waved a phone that didn't resemble any current brand and placed it on the podium. "...technology."

Just as the audience was waiting for Jiang Chen to continue, a shocking scene appeared.

The blue photo particles rose from the phone's camera to form two three-dimensional light curtains that looked extremely realistic. The curtain hovered beside Jiang Chen. When Jiang Chen slowly opened both his hands, he elevated the two screens gently.

The audience was completely stunned to the point of forgetting to clap. Whether it was the dean or Professor Graeme, everyone's eyes widened at the sci-fi scene. It wasn't that they never witnessed hologram technology before, but it was the first time they saw hologram technology that allowed human interaction.

And that wasn't the most important thing. All functions were achieved through a palm-sized phone!

Gradually, the audience became louder and finally broke out into excited cheers. The reporters outside the venue shouted as they expressed their shock in front of the camera.

"How's technology changing our lives?" Jiang Chen looked at the pairs of stunned eyes as he spoke in Han.

The hologram screens on both sides translated his words in real time to English and Frankish. The audience gasped, but they couldn't further demonstrate their astonishment because the previous scene already shocked them to the fullest.

The same question circled in everyone's mind - how did Future Technology do it?!

"This is how science is changing our lives."

Jiang Chen knew it was impossible to leave a deep impression on the university students with just a few sentences.

But technology could!

For these young people, advanced technology could leave a deeper impression compared to money. He knew someone must be taking photos in the audience, so his speech would definitely be uploaded online for more people to watch.

This would become a hiring advertisement for Future Technology!

The phone was Yao Yao's masterpiece - not only did it include all the functions of a smartphone, but it also implemented modules for hologram computers. Although his demonstration just showed basic functions of a hologram computer, he had no problem stunning the modern people who didn't know anything.

"I know everyone has a lot of questions - for example, what's so special about my phone, and how did Future Group create such an astonishing product? Of course, allow me to pass on the question and build suspense. Since this isn't a product launch from Future Technology and the smartphone in my hands is only in a conceptual stage, perhaps it will be introduced in the next two years."

"The emergence of an epoch-making technology can bring subversive changes to our daily life. Like the steam engine two centuries ago, the internal combustion engine a century ago, and the computers at the end of the last century, the smartphone in everyone's pocket will follow the same path."

"I once stressed the importance of science and technology not because Future Group's current investments are all concentrated in these cutting-edge technologies, but because it involves each of our futures..."

On the stage, Jiang Chen passionately demonstrated his speech skills and laid out the blueprints for the future.

From virtual reality to the connection from the virtual to the real

world, from new energy vehicles to the existence of maglev in science fiction, the audience had been shocked by the technology he showed. When they heard Jiang Chen's interpretation of the future, the students didn't raise the slightest objection.

The church bells rang indicating it was seven o'clock; an hour had gone by without notice, but the crowd present didn't sense the slightest passage of time. In the picture depicting the future described by Jiang Chen, a virtual reality scene subconsciously surfaced in everyone's brains.

Perhaps because they had really "seen" it and because his words seemed especially convincing that the listeners felt he spoke the truth.

At the conclusion of his speech, overwhelming applause rang out.

In the face of this applause, Jiang Chen's mouth couldn't help but slowly smile.

He knew the intended effect had been achieved. In any case, the name Future Group had been engraved in the hearts of these students. These people would be graduates from top universities and they would also be the source of talent for Future Group. Even if Jiang Chen could bring back advanced technology from the future, these technologies had to be digested and understood by people.

"In a short time...is it really possible to achieve it?" The audience couldn't hold their thoughts longer.

Jiang Chen didn't care about this abrupt statement as looked at the audience. He smiled and said.

"Whether it's going to be a short time or long time, I don't know. But if you join us, the time will certainly shorten by a lot."

The poser of the question sat back down with a red face. Even nonchalant words were still great encouragement. Of course, how the future would turn out wasn't something Jiang Chen could

forecast.

Jiang Chen gave the microphone back to Chen Yuqiao who was waiting by the side. Her expression when she took the microphone suggested she was still in shock. The organizers of the gala could see that students were desperate for Jiang Chen to speak longer.

After walking off the stage, Jiang Chen headed toward the back of the church. But this time, a middle-aged man in a suit walked toward him and extended his right hand with a smile. Behind him also followed two seemingly powerful bodyguards and a secretary carrying a briefcase. From the man's companions, it was easy to guess his extraordinary identity.

"Amazing speech."

"Thank you for the praise. May I ask your name?" Jiang Chen shook his hand.

"Evelyn Gillwick, Deputy Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Frankberg and the Minister of Economy and Energy." Evelyn cleared his throat and spoke with friendliness.

Chapter 517: The Tragedy

The clock at the church struck seven o'clock.

In the opera house, two streets past the University of Ber, the sound of the melodious symphony echoed. The Kermen Orchestra from Vienna, Austria delivered a spectacular performance. Under the direction of the concertmaster, all musicians bowed to the audience.

Taking advantage of the intermission, Sim and the Austrian president sitting at the top of the opera house happily chatted with each other.

"Very good performance; Evelyn will regret his early departure."

"I'll pass your compliments to the band and they'll be honored at praise coming from the President of Frankberg," the Austrian president said. "What's the next show?"

"It's 'Opera: Turandot,' the masterpiece of the famous Italian composer, Giacomo Puccini, played by the Ber National Orchestra. You can look forward to the next show." Sim crossed his legs as he rambled on in a lighthearted fashion.

The curtains opened again and a bonfire lit the stage. With a horn-like tune, the actors dressed like nomads filed out from behind the scenes. Beautiful but cold Yuan Dynasty Princess Turandot solemnly ordered her people: if a man could guess her three riddles, she would marry him.

Countless admirers fell at the soldiers' knives. With a smoke curtain, a chaotic atmosphere was created vividly.

At this point, a young man wearing black armor with a covered face carrying a black towel and violin case unhurriedly stepped onto the stage. Originally immersed in the opera, Sim frowned slightly as he didn't remember such a violinist debuting in "Turandot."

On the stage, two soldiers came forward and put swords to his neck, just like the previous martyrs. Looking at the young man, Turandot's frozen but elegant face looked surprised; she didn't remember a scene like this in the plot.

The masked young man smiled and opened the violin case...

And then he calmly took out the MP7 submachine gun hidden in the case!

Before anyone could react, he shot down the soldier in front of him and shouted a chant to the Holy War.

"All—"

At the same time, he pressed the trigger with a menacing smile.

Blood splattered in the air.

The deafening screams suppressed the sound of bullets. Without any shield to protect them, the audience in the front row quickly collapsed from the wave of bullets. The music of the opera came to a halt as the actors rushed backstage into the emergency exit tunnel in a panic.

Then they encountered another terrorist who opened the safety with a menacing smile...

The opera house was in complete mayhem. Men abandoned their female companions, and women dropped their heels. Just as everyone flooded toward the door, a warrior stood up to protect the women and children, but he soon died under the gunfire of the attacker.

Sim, sitting in a VIP seat, ducked under the table. The two bodyguards beside the President immediately took out their pistols and stationed themselves at the door to the room.

"Dammit, what's going on? There can't be an anti-terrorist drill in the middle of the opera?" The Austrian President hid behind the sofa and spoke with an ashen face.

"This isn't a joke. Don't worry, the security force of Frankberg is just outside." While Sim's expression didn't look any better, he was calm.

As the President, even if he didn't have too much decision-making power, he still knew how much money the National Defense Department spent each year on anti-terrorism. The soldiers from the security forces were the elites of the elite. In this world, they could easily deal with a few terrorists!

Just as the two Presidents and the Deputy Prime Minister were waiting to be rescued, the outside was in complete chaos.

"The Berlin Opera House was attacked by terrorists. There are a total of six gunmen. I repeat..."

The police and special forces stationed outside the opera house immediately stormed in and engaged in heavy gunfire with the terrorist. The smoke alarms rang, guns constantly fired, and the situation was in disarray.

Fortunately, the security force was there; they were the elites of Frankberg.

Unfortunately, the terrorists took the employees and actors as hostages. Even if the security force was composed of elites, they still had to be wary.

"Nelson, what are your people still waiting for?! They only have six people - attack now!" Rushing to the scene, Casper grabbed a walkie-talkie and took command but he couldn't with his wig that flew away in front of the media as he roared into the walkie-talkie.

"Sir, but they took the opera theater crew as hostages-" Crouching in the bunker, Nelson calmly reported to his commander.

"Fool! I'll give you 2 minutes to fight to get inside!"

...

"But sir, there are 57 hostages inside."

"Yes, but they are terrorists and our President is inside! So is the Austrian President! Attack, now!"

"...Roger."

Nelson took a deep breath then clenched his fists at his troops before swinging his fist down fiercely, signaling a command to attack.

With an order like this, there was no need for concern. Even with all 57 hostages dying, they had to rescue the two Presidents.

Attack commence!

...

In the grass field in front of the small church at the University of Ber, the gala still continued. But followed by the departures of other students, domestic students began to depart as well. When the irrelevant students and reporters all left, the grass field immediately looked a lot emptier.

At the same time, at the side door of the small church:

Jiang Chen let go of Evelyn's hand and looked at him with questions in his eyes.

"It's nice to meet you, Mr. Deputy Prime Minister. Do you have any questions?"

"I don't have any questions; I'm just stunned by the blueprints to the future in Mr. Jiang Chen's speech, so I really wanted to take the opportunity to talk to you. Tonight, I'm here as an alumnus to the University of Ber, so please just call me Evelyn." Evelyn gave him a friendly smile.

The Frankberg Deputy Prime Minister was extremely talkative and Jiang Chen was happy to develop a relationship with key government officials as they began to chat. Regarding VR, AR technology, and Future Group's plans to expand into pure electric

vehicles mentioned in Jiang Chen's speech, the Deputy Prime Minister graduated from a science background displayed rich interest.

Just as they began to discuss potential investments, the assistant behind him took a phone call before his expression drastically changed. He hung up the phone, walked to Evelyn with hasty steps, and whispered into his ear.

When Evelyn heard these words, his expression shifted immediately before looking apologetically at Jiang Chen.

"Regretfully, our conversation must end now - there is a small situation outside."

"It's okay. It's important to take care of business." Jiang Chen smiled.

Watching Evelyn and the group leaving, Jiang Chen began to frown. Although he didn't understand Franish, from the whisper to Evelyn, Jiang Chen sensed something was off.

He then recollected Carmen telling him to come home early as an ominous feeling lingered in his mind.

"Hello, are you Mr. Jiang Chen?"

Just then, he heard broken Han from behind him.

Jiang Chen turned around and looked at the slim and tall man.

The messy hair reflected an oily reflection under the light. The darkness under his eyes was either his deep eye sockets or dark eye bags. Other than the fervor flashing in his pupils, he didn't look energetic at all.

"I am. You are?"

"Amos Kimberly, Ph.D., of the University of Ber." The man smiled shyly, exposing a mouth full of white teeth. He held out his hand and grabbed Jiang Chen. "It's about what you mentioned in your speech earlier - basic and intermediate, Advanced artificial

intelligence grading - can I ask about it more in detail? Why are logical responses, self-compliance, emotions and the artificial intelligence grading standards? Can you elaborate on this?"

"Have I mentioned it?" Jiang Chen was surprised.

Amos nodded with certainty. He was sure he didn't miss a single word.

[Looks like I was too passionate...]

With the ardent expression on Amos' face, Jiang Chen was slightly troubled.

"Most of today's artificial intelligence programs remain at the logical response level. Whether it's IBM or Future Group, the use of artificial intelligence is at this level. Program based on human logic rules to determine a logical response. This is basic artificial intelligence and the safest artificial intelligence.

"I cannot agree with you on one point. In the forefront of science and technology, there are already many research results that could complete the self-complied function and even simulate human emotions." Amos raised some objections.

Jiang Chen thought for a moment before he said:

"It's normal for you to have disagreements since standards are determined by humans. But here I have to correct your point of view - what I said was that self-compliance is not the kind of self-compliance in the broad sense. How should I describe it? You can interpret it as thinking. Not thinking to provide services for humans or to complete tasks set by humans, but the thinking you and I are doing right now. Are you sure current technology can do that now?"

To Jiang Chen's question, Amos evidently paused and began to think.

After a moment of silence, he abruptly asked.

"Then did you manage to do it?"

Jiang Chen let out a sigh.

"Sorry, Mr. Amos, these are corporate secrets; I can't tell you more."

Then, with Amos' disappointed expression, Jiang Chen paused, smiled and took out a business card from his pocket and handed it to him

"If you are interested, you can join us. We can't give you the technical knowledge free of charge, but if you're willing to share your knowledge for our ideals, we welcome you to join us.

After he finished, Jiang Chen disregarded Amos's stunned expression, turned and walked toward the small church.

Chapter 518: National Blockade

When he returned to the church, Jiang Chen refused all media interviews and took Ayesha in the black Benz with the vehicle of the four bodyguards following close behind in the direction of the university gate. But at the gate, they were flagged down by the police.

When Jiang Chen rolled down his window and asked the security, he was informed that there was a curfew on the street and the surrounding area had been completely quarantined.

Jiang Chen noticed the police's eyes lingered for a long time on Ayesha's face.

The university gate was surrounded by a sizable crowd. To prevent accidents from occurring, the police began to assist security in dispersing the traffic. From the armored vehicles roaming outside to the helicopters hovering above, Jiang Chen started to realize the severity of the situation.

Jiang Chen asked Ayesha to drive the car to the parking lot beside the library as he immediately took off his seatbelt.

Ayesha also prepared to leave the car, but Jiang Chen immediately put his hand on her hand.

"Wait in the car. I'll be back in a moment."

"But—"

"I'll scope out the situation outside. Listen to me." Jiang Chen gently squeezed her hand to comfort her before getting out of the car.

Instincts told him that something severe might have happened outside, like a terrorist attack.

Ayesha's identity was quite sensitive to the situation; although she was Jiang Chen's assistant and bodyguard, it was hard to

ensure that the nationalists who lost all rationality wouldn't do something extreme to her at this critical period of time.

In order to prevent unnecessary trouble, it was better for Ayesha to not expose herself.

Perhaps she read something from Jiang Chen's eyes that Ayesha lowered her head in remorse.

"Sorry, I'm causing you trouble."

"You don't need to apologize." Both Jiang Chen's hands leaned against the door as he looked at her tenderly. "Just leave this to me."

A comforted smile emerged on her face.

"Mhmm."

He ordered two bodyguards to stay in the car while he took the other two to rush to the church. But when he arrived at the grass field in front of the church, the gala had been suspended.

Beside the wooden table of the church, the student organization leader Chen Yuqiao stared at the empty venue with an urge to cry. She wanted to use the speech delivered by Jiang Chen to host an unprecedented Han student gala.

But reality pulled a prank on her.

Not long after Jiang Chen's speech ended, the opera house two streets down was attacked by terrorists. The Frankberg government not only sent in their army but a state of emergency was also declared through media and a curfew was established in Ber.

With this status quo, the gala was obviously canceled.

"What exactly happened outside?" Jiang Chen walked up to Chen Yuqiao.

Chen Yuqiao smiled bitterly. Before she spoke, the vice director looked at Jiang Chen and said with an apologetic tone: "Just 15

minutes ago, the Ber Opera House was attacked by terrorists. The streets have been closed down and put under lockdown... Social media platforms have been flooded with news of the attack." As she spoke, she showed him her phone screen.

Just then, Jiang Chen's phone rang.

Xia Shiyu's anxious voice immediately came through. The moment she found out about Frankberg's terrorist's attack, she immediately thought of Jiang Chen who was attending the auto exhibition in Frankberg.

"How are you doing there? Are...Are you okay?"

News of the attack was already transmitted to the rest of the globe which made Jiang Chen think back to the Fran attack earlier that year. It was a similar situation since Fran's government closed their borders. Based on the situation outside, his flight was probably going to be delayed.

"Be calm, I'm okay. You know, I don't have such an artistic tendency to watch operas." Jiang Chen did his best to use a casual tone to comfort Xia Shiyu before he continued. "But the situation outside isn't looking so good, so my return flight is probably going to be delayed."

When Xia Shiyu heard Jiang Chen was safe, her tense heart finally felt relieved.

"... As long as you're okay. You have to be careful there."

Although Jiang Chen was confident he would be fine, his heart still warmed up when he heard Xia Shiyu's caring words.

"Don't worry; I'm safe on this side."

Jiang Chen hung up the phone and hesitated a while before he called the Xin Embassy in Frankberg to inquire about the status outside. Then he called Carmen Rothschild.

When the phone connected, Carmen's voice came through.

"Good evening, my friend. Since you called at this time... I guess you must be outside."

"I'm at the University of Ber." Jiang Chen let out a sigh.

"The University of Ber? Okay, I'll immediately arrange for people to pick you up... In around two hours, since it's not safe outside," Carmen said.

Although there were a lot of things Jiang Chen wanted to ask, he resisted the temptation in the end.

While he didn't have any direct evidence, from Carmen's reaction in the morning and the calmness in this voice now, the Rothschilds were clearly connected to this attack in some way. But what Jiang Chen didn't understand was: what did they have to gain out of it?

[Could it be...]

The cloudiness in his head suddenly had a hint of clarity.

"Are you listening?" Seeing as Jiang Chen had no reaction, Carmen probed him.

"Mhmm... Please and thank you."

"It's nothing, I have a good relationship with the Deputy, so he will pick you up in a bit. I'm truly sorry; your flight tomorrow may be delayed." Carmen used an apologetic tone.

"Frankberg will close its borders?" Jiang Chen asked.

"Five minutes ago, the parliament enacted emergency protocols and the borders will be shut for three days," Carmen said.

His left fist pressed against the wall as Jiang Chen cursed.

"What a disaster."

"That's right. Mhmm, the two cars can be parked in the garage of the library. I'll send people to pick them up tomorrow."

Jiang Chen hung up the phone and watched the student organization leader Chen Yuqiao walking in his direction.

"I'm sorry that such a thing happened; the school is closed. We can provide housing for you if you need." Chen Yuqiao bowed down apologetically.

"No need to trouble you guys, someone will pick me up soon." Jiang Chen smiled and signaled it was unnecessary to apologize.

Chen Yuqiao didn't insist further.

But just as Jiang Chen was prepared to leave, she anxiously asked him.

Although she already had Jiang Chen's phone number, it was through an improper method and she used the office's phone to call Jiang Chen. If possible, she wanted to use the opportunity to properly exchange phone numbers with Jiang Chen.

To store on her personal phone.

"Could-could I please get your number?"

Jiang Chen took a moment to process her request before he smiled.

"Of course."

Because he still had two hours, Jiang Chen didn't directly return to the library after leaving the church. Instead, he first called Xie Lei. When he was aware of what was going on in the hospital, Jiang Chen felt reassured.

Jiang Chen didn't see him for the entire duration of the trip but he was worried about the little guy. When he knew he was safe, Jiang Chen hung up the phone and headed to the university gates.

Currently, there was still a large crowd outside the gates. Although the police helped disperse most of the crowd, a lot of non-university personnel and students who lived off-campus surrounded the gate, shouting that they wanted to go home.

When Jiang Chen walked to the edge of the crowd, he obtained information about the outside.

"It's rumored that the refugees launched a terrorist attack - I knew those people were bad. Look what they brought from the Middle East! Crime, garbage, and now terrorism... People who let them in the borders must be crazy."

"I heard Sim and the Austrian President are all inside; I wonder what the situation is now."

"Quick! Look at this Twitter, three minutes ago... Oh, Dear God, our President, our President died!"

Someone blew a whistle. "Aha, I bet the boys from the Gulf played themselves this time."

Someone roared in indignation, "Why did they do it? God, were we not kind enough to them?"

Someone shook their head. "Who knows? You can never understand what religious madmen are thinking. We always tolerate them, but they seem to always want more."

Hearing all this conversation, Jiang Chen obtained a general understanding of the situation and turned back in the direction of the library.

The Berlin Opera House was attacked by terrorists.

The German president was killed.

All this was probably related to the Rothschilds.

[But why?]

[Or rather, what's he planning?]

Right now, the university students either returned to their dorms or gathered around the gate; there wasn't a soul on the discreet path to the library. Aside from faint light from the underground garage, the entire area around the library was dark.

His shadow was dragged along as he walked on the desolated path.

Just as he was trying to make sense of everything, a gunshot rang out from afar.

He suddenly raised his head as he stared in the direction of the library's underground garage.

Chapter 519: A Necessary Help

Inside the Empire Hotel, Carmen put the phone on the desk, picked up a wine glass, and walked back to the window. The night had cast its terror on the city. Carmen stared at his reflection in the window as well as the street lit up by police lights. He grinned.

The vivid, bright liquid swirled together and added a hint of menace to his smile.

An armored vehicle full of special forces disappeared at the end of the street and helicopters hovered above the Ber sky.

The door to the presidential suite opened.

Johnson, in a black suit, walked inside and quietly closed the door behind him.

"The actors have left the stage."

"Great."

Carmen's fingers rhythmically tapped the wineglass as he seemed to be deep in thought.

Johnson, who stood behind him, held his breath while waiting for an order.

"Johnson."

Johnson raised his chest.

"Yes!"

But to his surprise, his boss didn't give him an order but rather, spoke slowly and meaningfully.

"Ber is an interesting place."

Carmen's words made Johnson feel puzzled as he searched for an explanation from his boss.

Perhaps Carmen saw Johnson's confusion through the reflection in the window - he smiled.

"Johnson, you were part of Fran's expat army, right?"

"Yes, boss," Johnson replied in a deep voice.

"What's the closest scene that you have seen that resembled hell?" Carmen quietly asked.

Johnson carefully recollected a memory before he answered.

"In 2008, during a peacekeeping mission in Haiti, we were traveling with the peacekeepers whose task was to maintain local order and our task was to rescue the French diplomats besieged in the embassy. When we left the city, we encountered an attack from the opposition's armed forces... They were an army and thought we were an international food aid organization. In a country where 15 presidents were overthrown in 72 years, there was no reason for rationality and our commander was decisive. There was no communication - they fired first and we fought back immediately. They blocked us, so we killed our way through.

"How many people died?" Carmen said nonchalantly.

Johnson shook his head.

"That operation wasn't recorded on file; I only remember a lot of people fell that day."

Death didn't seem to bother him. But Carmen's face reflected in the wine glass had a greater menace written on it.

"Is that the worst hell you've seen? That's too minor." Carmen grinned.

Johnson shrugged. "In modern warfare, not a lot of people die."

"Is that so?"

Carmen spoke with an underlying meaning. He left the window and placed his wine on an expensive redwood table.

"This city is fortunate enough to witness history again. Johnson, remember what I said today. The decision made by the Rothschild family today is to prevent hell from breaking out."

...

"As you wish." Johnson nodded.

"Also, I need you to do something else for me."

When Johnson heard his boss had a mission for him, he immediately put on a serious expression and stood up straight.

"On your command."

"There's a fish that escaped the net - I need you to take care of it for me."

"Who?"

"Our beloved Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Evelyn."

...

The gunshots were from the direction of the library with a total of three shots.

Jiang Chen felt something was terribly wrong since he thought Ayesha was still there. He ran to the underground garage while he took out his pistol from the storage dimension and stuffed it in his pocket.

The streetlights continuously elongated his shadow; there wasn't a single student to be seen along the way. Security in foreign countries wasn't as stable as in Hua with so few people outside at night to begin with, not to mention the curfew now in place.

When he ran into the garage and saw Ayesha and the four bodyguards standing beside the two black Benz cars, he felt assured.

"I heard gunshots from the garage?"

"No, it was from the library." Ayesha shook her head. Seeing as Jiang Chen safely returned, she looked evidently relieved. "Please return to the car, it's not safe outside."

As Ayesha spoke, she extended her hand to Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen understood the meaning behind her resolute gaze as he reached into his pocket and took out the pistol and silencer. Because she didn't have a gun license, the weapons were all with Jiang Chen.

Ayesha installed modules on the Type-11 Pistol before stuffing it into her suit pocket. Although they might not engage in battle, it was safer to be prepared with gunshots in the vicinity.

Just as Jiang Chen was planning to get into the car, a voice in the distance stopped him.

"Please wait, Mr. Jiang Chen."

Jiang Chen's hand stopped at the car door. From the elevator in the garage, a middle-aged man in a suit was jogging towards him with heavy breaths. Ayesha put her hand beside herself in preparation and the four bodyguards all stood in front of Jiang Chen with a defensive stance.

From the lamp in the underground garage, Jiang Chen saw the person's face and signaled the bodyguards to not worry to allow the man to walk in front of him.

It was Evelyn, the Deputy Prime Minister of Frankberg. Jiang Chen just shook hands with him.

"Mr. Deputy Prime Minister, could I please ask—"

Because of his age and the fact he was wearing dress shoes, the one-hundred-meter distance was already overwhelming for him. With his hands on his knees, Evelyn took a moment to steady his arrhythmic breaths before standing up and looked seriously at Jiang Chen.

"I've certainly taken the liberty, but please help me, Mr. Jiang Chen."

Just as he spoke, Jiang Chen noticed the blood stains on the left arm of his suit. And his bodyguards were all gone.

"Help you... Could you tell me what happened?"

Jiang Chen was hesitant when he said this. Since he was about to leave Frankberg, he didn't want to go out of his way to trouble himself. But the one requesting help was the Deputy Prime Minister of Frankberg; it was hard for him to reject him.

"We have no time to explain - their people are about to be here." As Evelyn spoke, he anxiously looked in the direction of the elevator. "Please, take me out of here."

Jiang Chen only hesitated for one second before four blinding rays of light appeared at the entrance of the underground garage. Seeing this, Evelyn decisively got down on the ground with his hands covering his head. Four gunshots consecutively rang out from the distance.

The sound of bullets blowing by his ear made Jiang Chen jump up. Although he was wearing a carbon Nano bulletproof vest, guns weren't something to be messed with. The four bodyguards immediately swarmed Jiang Chen to act as human shields while Ayesha opened the bulletproof car door while firing back with her pistol.

Because she was wearing shades, the car lights didn't interfere with Ayesha's vision. Two bullets penetrated the other side's car window and struck the driver's head. This van rushing in their direction immediately stalled and smashed into a concrete pillar.

Seeing Jiang Chen's side firing back, the driver of the other van immediately turned his steering wheel and drifted the van to stop horizontally. The militants in baseball caps and masks swarmed out of the car while firing back behind cover.

There was no time for Jiang Chen to hesitate further. With guns being fired, he had no choice but to help the Deputy Prime Minister of Frankberg.

"Open the signal jammer! Don't just stand here; I have a

bulletproof vest on. Take cover and prepare to fire back!"

"Roger!"

He dragged open the car door and threw Evelyn, curled up on the ground, into the backseat. He then reached under the car seat and took out a briefcase from the storage dimension with the cover of darkness and tossed it out of the car.

The Celestial Trade bodyguard behind the pillar took the briefcase. He smoothly took out the pistols and clips from inside and tossed the weapons to his comrades. The four bodyguards finished equipping themselves in less than three seconds and started to fire back.

Fortunately both sides used pistols, and in terms of the penetrative power of the bullets and the stability of the pistols, Jiang Chen's side was certainly at an advantage.

Just then, the elevator a hundred meters behind Jiang Chen began to open.

The pursuants from the library had made their way down!

Chapter 520: Evacuate

Jiang Chen cursed. He took out his pistol and prepared to fight. When it came to combat abilities, the bodyguards were no match compared to their boss.

Evelyn saw Jiang Chen's intentions and pulled him aside.

"They have a lot of people - we can't fight them face-to-face. We have to get out of here immediately!"

"No need, we can just defend ourselves here. In two hours, the Deputy will be here to pick me up. Fu*k, I almost forgot police are at the university gates." Jiang Chen swore, took out the phone in his pocket, and prepared to call the police.

"Don't call the police! Wait, listen to me, they have people in the police system." Evelyn immediately stopped Jiang Chen's actions.

Jiang Chen was shocked as his movements froze, but he looked at Evelyn with a frown.

"I won't go against a country's entire police force for someone I just met once. If you want me to save you, then at least show me that you're one of the good guys. Tell me what's going on!"

Evelyn understood the warning in Jiang Chen's eyes. He was conflicted for a moment before he sighed.

"First, allow me to apologize to you for involving you in this... But please understand that it was because I didn't have any other options. If you're willing to help me pass through this hardship, you'll gain the friendship of all the people of Frankberg."

Bullets flew outside the car and left web-like cracks on the bulletproof window. Evelyn looked a bit scared, but such an expression wasn't seen on Jiang Chen's face. When he heard the honest words from the Deputy Prime Minister, he grinned.

"Your words seem to be promising too much. All the Frankberg

people? You're only the Deputy Prime Minister."

"A Deputy Prime Minister standing at historical crossroads." Evelyn corrected him with a solemn tone.

The militants from the elevator began to converge at Jiang Chen's side. The battle circumstances were especially dire, but Jiang Chen's side was still at an advantage.

Ayesha's shooting skills were excellent with at least six militants falling victim to her. The Celestial Trade bodyguards who were behind cover also showed strong combat abilities as they were all elites in the military. Although their opponents were no simple characters, they weren't injured because of protection from their carbon Nano bulletproof vests; the most serious damage was damage to their suits.

Time ticked on with the opposition's firepower gradually dying down.

Jiang Chen put the pistol back in his pocket as he nonchalantly asked while leaning against the seat:

"Who wants you dead?"

"Rothschild."

Jiang Chen visibly took a moment to process that before he scoffed: "You know, they're my business partners."

"There's no such thing as an eternal ally, whether in business or politics. You really think your relationship is that good? Let me tell you - the people who came to assassinate me is the Willie Society. You're familiar with the name Willie Society, right?"

Jiang Chen's pupils narrowed.

Evelyn's words were clearly telling him that Willie Society and the Rothschilds were connected somehow. Although he made this connection before, there was no direct evidence to prove this point. And up till now, Carmen was always friendly towards him.

But what made Jiang Chen even more surprised was that Evelyn knew the conflict between him and Willie Society.

"How can you prove this?"

"FNI, Frankberg National Intelligence. Our people have been closely following the Rothschild family's economic activities in Frankberg as well as Willie Society's penetration into West Europe. Based on our source's information—"

"How can you prove this?" Jiang Chen interrupted him as he repeated the same phrase, word for word.

Evelyn took a deep breath and said, "... I can't prove this; there's no assassin foolish enough to leave evidence that could suggest their identity. The evidence of Rothschild's connection with Willie Society is also in FNI's document room. But I can swear on Jesus Christ that everything I said is true. The choice to gain the friendship of the Frankberg Parliament or gratitude from the Rothschilds family is in your hands."

The gunshots outside the car stopped. Ayesha shot the two assassins attempting to escape and signaled the death of all 17 assassins.

Ayesha pulled open the driver side door and looked at Jiang Chen for further instructions.

Jiang Chen thought for two seconds before he looked at Evelyn.

"Tell me, how do you want me to help you?"

Evelyn clearly looked relieved.

"Take me to Austria."

Although Jiang Chen didn't know what Rothschild wanted to do, his instincts told him they were planning something extremely dangerous.

He didn't know what kind of influence this attack would have on Frankberg and all of Europe. But if the ultimate beneficiary was

the Willie Society, he felt the need to do something to stop the people who were a constant pestilence.

Especially since a friendly gesture to Evelyn now might reap future benefits.

As Jiang Chen made up his mind, he nodded at Evelyn. He agreed to help him and take him to Austria.

He ordered the four bodyguards to drag the bodies into the elevator then Jiang Chen ordered them to use the blood dissolver to dissolve the blood in the garage. When everyone looked away, he took the opportunity to transfer the 17 bodies into the storage dimension.

After using the blood dissolver to wash away the bloodstains, Jiang Chen pressed the elevator button to the top floor and walked out.

It produced an indescribable excitement to go against the most powerful family in Europe. But the situation hadn't deteriorated to the point where they stood in direct opposition to each other and Carmen shouldn't know about the incident that happened in the library. The moment the guns were fired, Jiang Chen ordered the bodyguards to open the signal jammer, so the gunmen who entered the basement shouldn't have communicated with the outside. The assassins who attempted to escape were executed by Ayesha, so their execution was flawless.

Figuring out how to make the rest of the steps go smoothly while removing the suspicion from him was what Jiang Chen needed to do next.

There was only an hour before the Deputy arrived at the library. If Jiang Chen wanted to help Evelyn without Rothschild knowing, he had to create an accident in the next hour...

First, he took out his phone and called Xie Lei who was visiting his sister.

"Hacking into the Ber Police Network - how confident are you?"

"It's going to be difficult. With what happened tonight, FNI's people will definitely help the local police to investigate. I only have a laptop and it's almost impossible to infiltrate their network right under their nose..."

"What if you had a super-computer?"

Xie Lei, who was holding the phone, took a second to process before his expression turned ecstatic.

"I can do it! With the computation power of a super-computer, even if it's the firewall of the National Defense Department, I can take it down for you!"

"Be careful - don't let them know it's you and don't let them know the computer's IP address."

Jiang Chen provided the administrative password to Xie Lei, hung up the phone, and took out the phone Yao Yao designed for him.

Future Group's biggest secret wasn't the "Peacekeeper" Intercontinental Ballistic Missile deployed under the sea, but it was the commercial quantum computer that was about to come online acting as the server for Godly Land! Although its performance wasn't comparable to the two experimental quantum computers in Fallout Shelter 027, its daunting computation power wasn't something that could be challenged by modern day super-computers.

The quantum computer located in Coro Island only had a usage of 1.1%, but even the 1.1% was enough to support 2 million beta testers to connect to the game simultaneously. Jiang Chen used his phone to remotely control the quantum computer and assigned 0.1% of spare power to Xie Lei.

With his hacker abilities along with the insane computational power of the quantum computer, it shouldn't be too difficult to

infiltrate the police network.

Even with the intervention of FNI agents!

Jiang Chen immediately took out four cigarette-box-sized high energy bombs and passed them to Ayesha.

"To the west wing of the library."

Ayesha nodded. Without any hesitation, she turned around.

Then Jiang Chen planned for a moment and called Chen Yuqiao.

When his call went through, Chen Yuqiao and the executives of the student organization were calling student registration to confirm their safety. Ber was currently under a curfew and the University of Ber was closed, so a lot of students blocked from the university were at risk.

The issue with the refugees meant that not only Frankberg but all of Europe's security was compromised. Especially with the accident that just occurred, it was hard to ensure people with ill-intentions wouldn't take advantage of the situation.

After Chen Yuqiao hung up the phone to the Han Embassy, she didn't even put her cell phone down before another call came through.

When she saw the caller, her expression turned stiff.

She didn't think Jiang Chen would call her personally.

"Hello?" Chen Yuqiao picked up the phone while dropping what she was doing. She headed outside.

"Are you interested in joining Future Group?"

Jiang Chen's words made Chen Yuqiao take an extra second to process before a joyful expression appeared on her face. She almost bit her tongue when she spoke.

Future Group was known for its competitive benefits package and anyone could see the imminent dominance of Future Group.

Regarding the olive vine extended by Jiang Chen, the temptation was intense for someone who was about to graduate.

"I'm very interested!"

"Good. After three business days, the European division will send you a contract." A smile emerged on Jiang Chen's face. "But before that, I need you to do something for me..."

After he hung up the phone, Ayesha, who finished planting the bombs, returned underground.

Evelyn looked nervously at Jiang Chen for the entire duration as his actions made him feel more and more unsettled.

"What do you want to do?"

"Turn the water muddy." Jiang Chen looked at Evelyn and sneered.

Chapter 521: Create Confusion

Ber Hospital.

Xie Lei brought his laptop to the corner of the restroom while his fingers turned into shadows as he furiously typed on the keyboard. With the lines of code flashing in front of his eyes, the teen's expression began to turn fervent.

To be able to use a supercomputer as the source of attack is something dreamed about by every hacker. A supercomputer to a hacker was just like a Godly weapon to a player. Although Jiang Chen only lent the super computer to him temporarily, it didn't take long for him to feel the power of "controlling the world"!

With a Godly weapon in hands, he traversed through the world of 0 and 1 like an unstoppable force. A password that must take hours to crack was just a few seconds with the help of the quantum computer.

That was just 0.1% of its computation power.

"Got it!" Xie Lei could no longer hide his excitement as he pulled down his hood to cover his face under the shadow to prevent other people from noticing his expression.

With ten minutes, he used the server of a contractor that provided maintenance service to the Ber Police Department as the jumping board and successfully infiltrated the police network. Because the infiltration time was extremely short, he didn't catch the attention of anyone.

The screen flashed; a city map labeled with red dots appeared on his computer screen.

The red dots that moved along the streets were the GPS coordinate of the police vehicles patrolling in the city. From the concentrated red dots, the Ber police had sent out all available forces and set up blockades at key entrances to the city.

Xie Lei clicked on the location of the University of Ber to expand the map of the patrolled area. Xie Lei's eyes stopped on the four red dots parked around the university gate as a proud curvature appeared on his face.

"I found you."

He pressed the microphone of the Bluetooth earphone, opened the voice change file, cleared his throat, and pressed the phone button.

...

"Do you really need to do this?"

Evelyn sat with Jiang Chen in the back of the Benz with a wry smile as he stared at the red button on the phone screen.

The two Benz already left the garage and stopped on the small road five hundred meters away from the library. Four bodyguards sat in one car while Ayesha, Jiang Chen, and the Deputy Prime Minister sat in another together.

"Mr. Evelyn, you know, I'm taking the risk to upset Rothschild for you. If you don't bring enough genuineness to the table, how would I trust that you won't burn the bridge after?" Jiang Chen said expressionlessly.

Jiang Chen couldn't risk letting Rothschild know about this and Evelyn's words were the key. It was too obvious for the public figure to wear a collar, and there was no surgery condition to inject the slavery chip.

The only method to ensure he would keep his mouth shut was to drag him down with him.

"You only have half a minute to hesitate."

But what Jiang Chen didn't expect was the moment he said these words, Evelyn pressed the button.

Flames erupted from the library five hundred meters out,

followed by an explosive bang.

Debris flew and scattered.

The entire west wing slowly collapsed under the explosion and crashed the entire garage.

"Jesus Christ... This is magnificent." Evelyn returned the phone to Jiang Chen while he muttered at the scene outside the window.

"You surprised me. You pressed the button without hesitation." Jiang Chen took the phone and signaled for Ayesha to start the car.

"I don't have any other choices," Evelyn shrugged, "Compared to the future of the country, a library building is nothing. Especially since there shouldn't be anyone in the library."

On his face, Jiang Chen saw repent, but he didn't see any regret.

As a qualified politician, the Deputy Prime Minister possessed all the qualities a politician should have.

Jiang Chen laughed and closed the camera on the side.

"If other people know I pressed the button, my political career will be over." Evelyn sighed.

"Don't worry, as long as you don't sell me out, no one will know who pressed the button."

...

The sudden explosion sent a shockwave across the entire university. The library with thick smoke rising was reflected in thousands of terrified pupils.

Mayhem ensued.

No one knew why the quiet university would become the target of a terrorist attack, they only knew it happened, it happened inches away from them!

People screamed, attempted to escape the university where terrorists were disguised in. The police and security at the

university gate did all they could to comfort people's emotions, prevent people from rushing into the streets, but it was futile against the emotional crowd.

It was a chaotic scene.

The crowd flooding outside blocked the fire trucks and ambulances attempting to enter the university. The police stationed at the gate roared into the radio on their shoulder to report the status at the University of Ber while requesting for additional backup from the headquarter.

But the police didn't know was that they were not communicating with the headquarter, but they were speaking with Xie Lei who hijacked the communication channel.

"Please remain calm, Mr. Bills, backup in on the way, please maintain the order of the scene."

"Quick, we can't hold the crowd anymore! There are at least ten thousand people... This is insane, Han international students are protesting, you better be quick."

Bills at the scene hung up the phone rudely as a smile emerged on Xie Lei's face at the corner of the restroom in the hospital.

\[Keep waiting, back up will never arrive.\]

Not only that...

Following Jiang Chen's command, the teen's fingers typed on the keyboard and changed the patrol route of the police vehicles in the city without leaving a trace.

Right now, the Han international students at the university gate were protesting that the Ber police was locking them together with terrorists. The usually timid international students leading a protest was something unexpected by the Ber police.

As the student organizations with the largest member base, their protest received the support of other students. No one wanted to

be locked with terrorists inside a cage together. With a flood of over ten thousand people, a police team of 20 people with shields was futile.

It didn't take long for the people in the university to break through the blockade and escaped onto the street.

The situation began to deteriorate, and the police lost control.

Jiang Chen and the group used the chaos at the gate to rush out of the university along with a few other vehicles.

"Are you crazy?" The student union president with a hooked nose found Chen Yuqiao as he stared at her with an aggressive tone, "Why didn't you stop your people. If an accident happened—"

"Why would I stop them?" Chen Yuqiao interrupted the student union president and looked at him seriously, "We are exercising our legal rights, and we have the right to protest. Also, please be cautious of your tone, you don't have the right to order me, we don't have a subordinate relationship."

The hooked nose looked at her, dumbfounded. He didn't think Chen Yuqiao who was always easy to talk to would suddenly change to such a firm stance.

His mouth opened and closed as he only managed to squeeze out a few "Okays" without properly saying a complete sentence.

Tonight, the entire city won't be peaceful.

Chapter 522: Suspicion

Xie Lei changed the patrol route of the police vehicles in the city and created a safe passage for Jiang Chen and the group to the south rural area of Ber. Because the entire city was given a curfew, the major highways in the city were under heavy congestion.

Xie Lei then hacked into the traffic control system and paralyzed a few major intersections red lights to block the flow of traffics from Jiang Chen in order to prevent their escape route from being congested.

"The inspection station two kilometers to your southeast is gone. I have ordered them to change shifts."

Since he was incorporated by Jiang Chen, it has been a while since he had the thrill of using his ability without restriction.

"Send a similar command to a few other inspection stations in the North and East area to prevent suspicion."

"Understood!"

"Also, don't have too much fun."

"Got it!"

Jiang Chen hung up the phone and used the mirror to look at Ayesha.

"Ayesha, is the tracking system on the car closed?"

"I've taken it out," Ayesha answered sternly while holding onto the wheel.

"Excellent."

Jiang Chen made a hush gesture and then called Carmen Rothschild.

...

"I need an explanation."

Carmen looked gravely at Johnson who stood in front of him with his head buried, without daring even to breathe heavily.

Seeing Johnson didn't say a word, Carmen continued.

"I waited till now, and only received the news that a terrorist attack occurred at the library of the University of Ber. Where did Evelyn go? Is he dead or alive? This is not the result I want; I need the Deputy Prime Minister to die in Ber! And not appear in the next election as an opposition."

"I'm very sorry!" Johnson lowered his head.

Perhaps Carmen realized he was too emotional, he took a deep breath and recollected his thought.

"I don't want to hear your apologies, I need an explanation."

"Our people engaged in crossfire at the University of Ber with the bodyguards of the Deputy Prime Minister..."

"And then?"

"On the first floor at the library gate, our people killed the last three bodyguards around Evelyn. Evelyn ran inside, and then our people lost communication..." A drop of cold sweat dripped down from Johnson's forehead.

"Lost communication, and then the explosion." Carmen sighed, and poured him another glass of wine, "What did those idiots think they did?"

The two Benz's GPS signal was lost in the underground parking of the library, looks like the two vehicles must be buried under the debris.

This is going to be difficult... He asked Jiang Chen to wait for him at the parking lot, but an explosion happened coincidentally at the library. Anyone would suspect it was a plotted murder which would without a doubt cause a strain in their relationship.

Instincts told him that Jiang Chen didn't die in the explosion.

When Carmen thought about this, he began to have a headache. It was a complete coincidence to drag Jiang Chen into this, and he couldn't think of an explanation to this event within a short period of time.

But what he didn't expect was that Jiang Chen directed the explosion himself.

Jiang Chen didn't possess the motive to cause an explosion. Evelyn hid in the west wing of the library; the gunmen who failed to find him chose to end the search as soon as possible. God knows if a donkey had kicked their head as they chose to blow the building up. If it was the Willie Society, they certainly possessed the ability to blow a building up.

But the explanation would fail to explain why the Willie Society gunmen would lose communication after the explosion.

Unless there was someone that was the perpetrator behind the explosion and their target was Jiang Chen? But because of the coincidence, he didn't know if Jiang Chen has died, but the Willie Society Gunmen happened to be buried alive.

At the same time, the phone on the table rang.

Carmen looked at the caller on the screen as his eyebrows visibly twitched. He hesitated for a moment before he picked up the phone.

Without any small talk, the moment the phone was connected, Jiang Chen's thunderous roar came from the other side.

"Mr. Rothschild, I want to know what exactly happened. If I didn't happen to be in the car, if my bodyguard didn't react fast enough, if I didn't happen to just be two meters away from the door, I would have been fu*king buried alive!"

"Please... Mhmm, remain calm, my friend." Carmen with a wry smile attempted to calm Jiang Chen's emotion, but Jiang Chen who just "escaped from death" clearly didn't take in his words.

"Friend? This is how the Rothschild family treat their friend?"

"Where are you, I'll send people to pick—"

"Haha, no need to bother you anymore, my Frankberg trip is ending early. I will be leaving Frankberg tonight, with my own method! I will be on the plane tomorrow morning."

"I'm truly sorry, my friend. Please trust me, I will give you an explanation." Carmen closed his eyes and said courteously.

"I hope so."

Jiang Chen hung up the phone.

Carmen took a deep breath and put the phone back on the table.

"Boss, we..."

"There is no use looking for an explanation now, just put him aside... Also, compared to the relationship with Future Group, there are more important things we must do." Carmen quickly adjusted his mood and said in an emotionless tone.

...

After Jiang Chen dropped Carmen's call, he let out a breath. He didn't know if his acting successfully tricked the small cunning fox of the Rothschild family, but he did everything he could.

The rest would be up to luck.

"Frankberg has closed its borders, but since the attack happened less than two hours ago, the lengthy borders could not be completely closed within such a short period of time. We'll take an alternative path to the Frankberg-Austria border. If there are no surprises, we won't be blocked along the way."

"If we meet an inspection blockade... we'll ram through."

Fortunately, Jiang Chen didn't encounter any inspection zones along the way. They made their way through a muddy path in the rural area and passed through the Frankberg-Austria border.

Although there were tense moments along the way, they managed to dodge by the knife's edge without problems.

The two Benzs were parked by the border as the group chose to pass the border on foot through the forest. Jiang Chen purposely slowed down by a few steps and threw the cars into the storage dimension to remove their traces.

Just as the day began to break, the group finally walked out from the rocky paths and arrived in a small town in Austria.

"I'll just send you to here. The rest of the way will be up to you." When Jiang Chen traversed through the forest, he looked at Evelyn who was gasping for breath on the ground.

For a politician that spent most of his days in the office, the outdoor activity of climbing mountains was challenging.

"No problem... Can I burrow a few hundred Euros from you? For a taxi," Evelyn asked shamelessly.

Jiang Chen took a few bills out and threw them beside him.

Evelyn on the ground grinned and picked up the bills.

"Best of luck, I hope you won't make my investment [skit the water](#)."

"Rest assured."

Jiang Chen read the sternness in Evelyn's eyes and nodded, he then turned around to signal Ayesha and the bodyguards to leave.

He has done everything he could.

As for if Evelyn could stop Rothschild's plan, it has nothing to do with him anymore.

Skit the water: An analogy that means the same thing as go to waste.

Chapter 523: The Ignited Fuse

"Yesterday, a shooting incident occurred at the refugee's camp in west Bava which resulted in the death of ten Syrian refugees. The attackers directly threw explosives inside the refugee camp. The organization "Nomadic Teens" claimed responsibility for this attack..."

It has been three days since Jiang Chen returned to the mansion in Xin. He has grown into the habit of watching the news in the morning and obviously would not miss the follow-up reports on the attack at the Opera House. He wasn't bothered by the subsequent event but was rather troubled by the plan of the Rothschild family.

Installing a right wing party to lead the country? But to direct a terrorist attack was too much of a cost.

Just like the usual, Ayesha brought the toasts and the hot milk to the table, then in swift steps, she walked to the living room and gently hugged Jiang Chen from behind the sofa.

"Breakfast is ready."

"Mhmm."

Jiang Chen smiled and turned around to kiss the girl tenderly. With her face slowly blushing, Jiang Chen turned off the TV, took her hand, and then walk to the dining room.

With the conclusion of the Germany trip, there were still many things he needed to take care.

After breakfast, Jiang Chen on a boat visited New Moon Island to find Ivan who was training new recruits at the shooting range.

Followed by the increase in production at the Sixth Street, the monthly production of kinetic skeletons had reached a total of 500 units, and the continuous stream of kinetic skeletons flowed into the modern world through Jiang Chen. Currently, the 1500

soldiers in Celestial Trade all possessed a unit which meant the penetration rate was even higher compared to the NAC soldiers.

The situation on the wasteland had been stabilized, and the need to expand military arms was not as critical as before, so demand had dropped. Jiang Chen took the opportunity to prioritize the equipment of the force in the modern world to protect the assets there.

Inside the shooting range, soldiers in kinetic skeletons with Reaper Assault Rifles were shooting at the fast-moving targets. On the other side of the training field, ten soldiers were entering into the arena to simulate city attack scenarios with the cooperation of the reconnaissance drones and attack drones.

"Yo," when Jiang Chen came, Ivan smiled, leaned the gun beside the table, and greeted.

"How's the training going?"

"Absolutely perfect. The virtual reality training system is wonderful. Usually, training a new recruit would take three months, we only need one month to finish now."

Jiang Chen nodded. To increase the training efficiency of Celestial Trade, he assigned 1% of the computation power from the commercial quantum computer used to serve the "Phantom" helmet to run the virtual reality system in order to best simulate the details of a battlefield.

The 1% computation power was not to be underestimated. Even if the quantum computer had a lower power consumption compared to a traditional supercomputer, Celestial Trade still needed to pay over half a million in electricity a month for that 1%.

And the chambers the soldiers used were all produced from the Sixth Street; the amount of nutrient solution needed per day was not a small number either.

Due to the limited population, Xin could only seek the path of

elite soldiers.

"You're doing great. I will install new training modules in the control terminal. You can arrange 100 soldiers you trust to use the new training module to conduct training. The requirement is that their height must be above 170 centimeters with a weight between 60 to 75 kilograms." Jiang Chen told Ivan.

Ivan stood up straight and saluted, "Yes, sir!"

"Are you not interested in the training content?" Seeing Ivan didn't have any questions, Jiang Chen asked.

"If the boss thinks I need to know, then the boss will tell me." Ivan rubbed his forehead and grinned.

Order is everything!

As a soldier, it was enough to execute the order given by the superior. Ivan had been training the soldiers with the strict rules mindset; it was also because he abided by it for many years in the military.

Jiang Chen was impressed by Ivan's response as he patted him on the shoulder.

"it is nothing secretive, you'll know very soon. If you're interested, you can also take the training. Power armor. Have you heard of this before?"

"Power armor?" Ivan paused for a moment before his eyebrows furrowed, searching in his head. "I seem to have heard of it somewhere."

"Movie." Jiang Chen reminded.

"Right! That, Hollywood movie. Could it be..." Ivan seemed to have realized something as he looked at Jiang Chen.

"That's right. The training module is about training to use the power armor. Do you remember the shooting incident that happened on Coro Island? A few seconds of video?" Jiang Chen

smiled.

Ivan nodded and then looked at Jiang Chen in shock.

"It is capable of providing bullet, shell, grenade and nuclear strike protection. The right arm could be installed with revolving machine guns, anti-armor cannons or a repair module, the airdrop type could be parachuted from thousands of meters up in the air."

Ivan was just about to ask "does single soldier armor really have combat value?" But when he listened to Jiang Chen's description and swallowed the sentence back.

"This thing... Can the functionality really be achieved?" Ivan felt his voice was shaking when he asked. If power armor could really achieve the functions Jiang Chen described, this new type of battle machine could transform the structure of modern warfare!

With how Ivan was still stunned, Jiang Chen only laughed.

It was nothing. With the assistance of the airdrop pod, it could be directly launched down from the synchronous orbit. The power armor was originally designed for nuclear "transformed" city environments, so its ability to withstand nuclear radiation was without a doubt. It could traverse through terrains impassable by vehicles, provide temporarily cover for light infantry in street engagements and provide firepower coverage.

"It is within the last period of the testing phase, but the training module is complete. Once the one hundred soldiers are familiarized with the control of the armor through the virtual reality training system, the first batch of power armors should arrive in New Moon Island too. What you have to be aware of is, although power armor itself does not need to be kept a secret, its functionality and weapon specifications must be kept confidential. So your task is extremely critical. You must choose soldiers that are trustworthy to participate in training," Jiang Chen said sternly.

"Leave it up to me." Ivan solemnly nodded and promised.

"I trust your ability." Jiang Chen smiled. "Other than the power armor, there is also a training module on fixed wing aircraft. This is a bit more complicated. Air force and land force are completely two separate systems, and even with the assistance of genetic vaccines, aircraft's requirement for the pilot is extremely strict. I have a physical examination checklist here, and you only need to arrange for people to go through the examination. If there are not enough people in the army, you can recruit from Xin citizens."

"Not enough people?" Ivan had a dumbfounded expression as he looked puzzled, "Do we need a lot of people?"

Jiang Chen shook his hand.

"We only need 20 people."

"Only 20 people? There are 1568 soldiers in Celestial Trade, how can we not find just 20 people." Ivan was not convinced.

Jiang Chen mysteriously smiled and patted the shoulder of the old soldier.

"Therefore, the criteria are extremely strict. As to how strict it is, you'll see."

Chapter 524: Power Armor Training

"On the evening of October 31, a large-scale terrorist attack occurred at the Opera House. 121 people including the President have been killed in this attack. 31 people including the Austrian President are seriously injured. Two hours after the attack, an explosion occurred at the University library two blocks away. The bodies of the victims were not found on the scene. There is currently no evidence suggesting the two attacks are related..."

"The police found the bodies of six gunmen at the crime scene, four of whom were Syrian and two men from Somalia and Libya. The police confirmed that six were registered in the refugee camps in the suburbs of Bav. At present, no individual or organization has claimed responsibility for the attack. For security reasons, the police temporarily closed the refugee camps in the Bav province."

"Multiple embassies lowered their flag to half musk."

"The National Anti-Terrorism Office, Casper, resigned."

"In the early morning, the leader of emerging anti-refugee far-right party New Choice Party', Crete Petrie, delivered a speech in the Federal Parliament, sternly condemning the Chancellor for being too weak on the refugee issue, and it is those people that brought terrorism. The Crete's speech was criticized by many lawmakers as being extreme and irrational, but it won applause from the audience."

"Analysts commented that this event might heighten the New Choice Party support rate to a new high. The CDU, led by Merkel, has lost two constituencies. After this incident, Bav and neighboring constituencies will be favoring the New Choice Party..."

As soon as the picture turned, the scene changed to outside parliament. The reporter handed the microphone to a Germanic man with a flag on his face. The reporter had not asked the

question, and the man screamed out in anger.

"Close all the refugee camps! I have had enough! Help me ask the Chancellor. Do you have to wait for the garbage to ruin everything to do something about it? God, it shouldn't be our president that died in there, it should be you!"

Jiang Chen turned off the TV.

He leaned on the sofa and gently tapped his finger on the arm of the sofa.

One day passed since they crossed the Austrian border. At this moment, he was sitting in the lounge of Xin's embassy in Austria.

Because it is a small country, limited by factors such as influence and budget, the embassy here was not as luxurious as the embassies in the UA or Hua. Xin only bought a two-story office with a total of five hundred square meters near the city center and transformed it into the embassy.

By the way, taking a left turn out the door is the Argentina embassy.

After crossing the border and separating from Evelyn, Jiang Chen went to the nearest town and dialed the telephone number of the embassy.

After receiving his call, Bram, the ambassador in Austria, immediately arranged for two cars to go to the border town. They took him back to the embassy office in Vienna and arranged a room for him and Ayesha to rest in. The four Celestial Trade bodyguards following Jiang Chen also stayed at the nearby hotel.

As a public official from Xin, who didn't know the impact of Celestial Trade on the country's politics? It is precisely because of this that Bram was attentive and meticulous during the entire duration.

The sky was just beginning to light up, and Ayesha was still asleep. Because he wasn't sleeping anymore, he got out of bed and

watched TV in the living room.

There was no suspense, and the morning news were all covering the attack. Just like the attack that happened in Paris, France and Brussels, Belgium. Everyone was condemning, everyone was angry, and everyone was praying for the victims.

The public opinion of the attacks was not fundamentally different. But from the seriousness of Evelyn, the attack would ignite a long-buried fuse.

"What will be detonated?"

Muttering, Jiang Chen's gaze swept the map of Europe attached to the wall.

Just then, there was a knock on the door.

Glancing at the closed bedroom door, Jiang Chen casually said.

"Please come in."

The door opened, and Ambassador Bram appeared at the door. After opening the door, he did not enter the house; just stood there with a smile.

"Mr. Jiang Chen, someone outside wants to see you."

"Who?" Jiang Chen asked unexpectedly.

"An old man named Ccides. He claims to be the butler of Rothschild."

A very unexpected visitor. Jiang Chen had thought that Rothschild would send someone to meet him, unravel the "misunderstanding" and repair the cracks in their relationship, but did not expect that it was actually Ccides making this trip.

"I am extremely grateful that you didn't close the door on me, Mr. Jiang."

"Haha, there is no way I will not let you in." Jiang Chen smiled at the kind-hearted old butler.

"Before the topic begins, please allow me to apologize for the hospitality of the previous day. I hope that Mr. Jiang can understand."

"Of course, but I need an explanation for the explosion that took place in the library."

Ccides sighed.

"Master Carmen swears in the name of the Rothschild family that the explosion has nothing to do with us. I promise you, we will find out who actually launched the despicable assassination and poured the dirty water on the Rothschild name to cause a rift in our friendship."

Since Ccides had already said this, Jiang Chen didn't persist on this issue further, so he accepted the Rothschild family's argument that the explosion of the library had nothing to do with them.

It has nothing to do with them. After all, the explosion was Jiang Chen's self-directed performance.

"No matter who they are, I will definitely let those rats pay the price," regardless Jiang Chen still had to finish acting as he said in a furious voice.

After sending away the butler, Jiang Chen looked up at the clock. It was getting late, so he was going to wake Ayesha up. Typically, Ayesha woke up him, but because they "slept too late" last night, it was his job now.

However, when he pushed open the door, Ayesha was already dressed and looking out the window.

Jiang Chen hugged the petite body and spoke softly in her ear.

"What are you looking at?"

"The street... has a familiar feeling."

"Familiar feeling?"

"Well... maybe it's just an illusion." Looking at the bustling

Mettern Street, Ayesha whispered.

Born in the flames of war, she has an extraordinary acuteness to the war. But looking at the busy streets, she was skeptical of her own judgment, using the word illusion to summarize her instincts.

In the afternoon, Bram personally drove Jiang Chen and the others to the airport.

After waiting for two hours, everyone boarded the plane safely.

The voice of the flight attendant rang in his ear. He looked at the ground further and further below him, and slowly breathed out, relieved. No matter what the Rothschild family is planning, no matter how many people will bleed, it has nothing to do with him anymore.

Somehow, he suddenly remembered the conversation between the old Rothschild and him in the forest.

Keep it to yourself...?

He closed his eyes and leaned back in the seat.

Chapter 525: Aurora-20

Apocalypse.

After half a month's efforts, the mutant nests in the west side of Wanghai were cleared out. Other than that, NAC soldiers built eleven inspection stations along Huangpu River to block all bridges that connected the west side of the city to the east side to prevent mutants from spreading to the west.

All the mutant nests on the west side of the city, whether on the surface or underground were all eliminated by NAC soldiers and mercenaries. Although creatures such as mutated cockroaches and rats were hard to remove completely, the more hostile mutants such as zombies, Roshans and even Death Claws were completely extinct from the west side. Due to the force of the NAC, the survivor groups in the area were all incorporated under NAC's control.

The mercenary groups and raider groups without the cleanest track records either reformed or left the city. When they witnessed the rain of rockets in the sky, they had no desire to be defiant at all. NAC had used its supreme power to announce its control over Wanghai.

Liuding Town who previously had the same influence as the Sixth Street could no longer stand against the behemoth known as NAC.

When they saw God's Cane strike onto the city center, they had completely accepted the fact. They didn't know it was NAC's battle against the Supreme as they were only aware of NAC's mutant nest cleaning project. Therefore, they mistakenly thought that the tungsten rod was launched by NAC...

Other than asserting a controlling position, NAC also sent engineering soldiers with nuclear protective suits to the city center to clean the radiation source piled up in the area.

The difficult to remove radiation source was collected to lead barrels and thrown into a deep pit created by tungsten rods before being buried under concrete with lead content. And the area with lower levels of radiation was cleaned with radiation cleaning agents; it wouldn't take too long before the gamma level in the city center return to normal levels.

Also, the explorer teams were sent to nuclear companies, research institutes, and industrial bases to search for prewar technology. All the collected documents would be sent to Camp 027 for control and categorization. The city center "protected" by radiation was just like an untarnished treasure. A lot of the technical documents hidden underground were well preserved and were of high value. The one thousand scientists in Camp 027 instantly became overwhelmed with work.

The Huangpu River that ran straight across Wanghai was just like the Berlin Wall; the left side was the NAC controlled area with established order while the right side remained as the land of chaos.

Followed by the end of the mutants flood, the survivor groups in the east had returned from the large survival bases such as Liuding to return to their homes and restart their lives. But when they witnessed the difference between the two banks, without the need for more persuasion, the survivors who longed for the safety and stability of the west city brought their families and migrated to the west bank.

The inspection stations that spanned across Huangpu River didn't stop their migration, but the entire population of survivors moving into NAC territory must surrender their nuclear grenades, mini nukes, and other dangerous goods. The nuclear prohibition policy was beginning to push outward from the Sixth Street and enact in all NAC controlled territory.

Currently, in Wanghai Airport.

Ten construction vehicles were moving along the taxi lane and repairing the destroyed airport. The repair work was contracted out by NAC to the biggest construction company in Sixth Street – Metal Shell Commerce with the Second Division responsible for the safety of the construction site.

The commercial airport prewar had been part of NAC's requisition as NAC's first military airport managed by the closest camp, Camp 027. Currently, in the hanger of the airport, there was a fluid and dynamic-looking aircraft that resembled a swallow, its name was Aurora-20.

Jiang Chen was in front of the hanger with Fang Weijie touring the newly developed weapon by the fallout shelter.

"Aurora-20, fixed-wing fighter, it can take off through both the vertical takeoff and runway modes. The aircraft can be mounted with two rounds of short-range air-to-air missiles and four rounds of long-range air or ground missiles. A 10mm cannon is installed at the head of the aircraft. Based on

Including Tiger II, Transport Helicopter Type-51, the most advanced military techs in the NAC were created from the team led by Fang Weijie.

Jiang Chen nodded in content as he stared at the powerful looking fighter.

"What about the stealth capacity and speed?"

Stealth capability and speed are the life of a fighter, armor thickness at high altitude offered less significance. No matter how advanced the fighter, it is difficult to withstand the impact of two missiles' direct hit.

"The aircraft shell is coated with a radar signal attenuation coating that displays only a sparrow-sized area on most radars. The radar signal detection system at the bottom of the aircraft can reverse track the coordinates of the ground radar base station. As

for the speed, the maximum cruise speed is up to Mach 4.5." A smug look appeared on Fang Weijie's face.

Jiang Chen was extremely impressed with the number.

4.5 Mach's highest speed has surpassed the Mig 25 high-altitude high-speed interceptor's 3.2 Mach's record. The number was approaching the speed limit a fighter jet could reach in the atmosphere.

Of course, in case of near combat situations, it was infeasible to combat at the highest speed. Disregarding 4.5 Mach, even if the speed was Mach 2, the acceleration of the fighter taking a turn would knock the pilot out.

In addition, according to Fang Weijie's introduction, this "Aurora-20" fighter has a combat radius of up to 3100 kilometers in the case with no tanker support, the number has far exceeded F22's 2177 kilometers record. It was partially because the aircraft's new titanium alloy which made the weight of the aircraft compared to the 21st-century fighter much lighter, it was also because the aircraft's use of the engine and synthetic fuels were better than the technology level of the 21st century.

"From the engine to the fire control system, everything is PAC's military technology. From the aircraft landing gear to air to air missiles, everything was made using 3D printing technology.

"What is the feasibility of industrial production?" Jiang Chen asked.

The cost of 3D printing was high and will waste a lot of materials and energy. The cost of producing a fighter through 3D printing was three times the cost of producing a fighter on a production line. Although NAC was rich, if the cutting-edge weapons continued to rely on 3D printing technology, Jiang Chen would still be pained by the money he would have to burn.

"It is difficult. The engine heat-resistant material is hard to

produce with Sixth Street's industrial capability." Fang Weijie shook his head.

Jiang Chen thought for a moment and said.

"Hand the production information of some simple parts of the production process to the Sixth Street's military factory; outsource these parts as much as possible too. Thus, the cost should be much lower than 3D printing, but this will also shorten the production cycle, do you think Is it feasible?

Fang Wei pinched his chin and began to contemplate.

"Simple parts of the process? Strictly speaking, there is no one part of the production process that is simple..."

Jiang Chen shook his head and smiled.

"What I refer to as simple process is not what we know as easy to produce, but instead technological feasibility. Don't underestimate the innovation of the wasteland people. As long as we offer the right price, technologically feasible, maybe they could develop production processes at a lower cost."

Fang Weijie was not exactly convinced by what Jiang Chen said. Since he came from the fallout shelter and was part of the elite level before the war, he didn't believe the "hobo" dressed survivors had the capability to solve the production problem of the fighter parts.

But due to the class difference, he didn't display his scorn to the survivors on the wasteland.

Seeing Fang Weijie was silent, Jiang Chen could guess what he thought. But he only smiled without further discussing the problem.

Fang Weijie was proud, but the proudness didn't come from arrogance, the proudness originates from his meticulousness to technical capability.

"Science and technology are two completely separate topics. The former dictates the growth of the latter; the latter determines the value of the former. To be able to survive on the cruel wasteland to this day, it already proved the innovation of the survivors."

"But you can't count on a bunch of refugees to do the work of technicians... Okay, if you insist. Let me think... screw, wings, seat cover, ejection seat, control panel shell, around 60% of the basic parts are relatively easy to make." Fang Weijie sighed in defeat.

"Great." Jiang Chen nodded and pleasingly patted the scientist's shoulder, "Make a detailed list of the parts and give it to Xu Lu. The rest of the parts will still be produced by 3D printing."

"I understand." Fang Weijie nodded.

They were only responsible for the development, building of the first prototype model, and providing blueprints and production specifications. As to the exact details of the production process, it would be the responsibility of the Fishbone Military Factory, not the worry of the scientists.

"Regarding the next research project," Jiang Chen paused and looked at Fang Weijie seriously, "I hope you can develop an airship with long airtime, armor protection capability, and basic firepower.

"Airship? Armor protection capacity?" Fang Weijie took a second to process this as his eyebrows furrowed. "Built with steel?"

"Is it difficult to achieve technically?" Looking at Fang Weijie's troubled look, Jiang Chen asked.

"No, technically, it is not difficult to achieve, but... I have never heard of an airship before," Fang Weijie said wryly

His experience naturally had to be from before the war. Disregarding before the war, the airship with poor mobility and as a large target was eliminated as early as the beginning of World War II. Although the 22-century technology could create a steel

airship without much difficulty, this kind of weapons being cost-effective was something Fang Weijie was deeply skeptical about.

So he euphemistically expressed that he had never heard of such weapons, hoping Jiang Chen would change his mind.

"It's okay, if there is none before the war, just create one with the pre-war technology from the beginning." However, Jiang Chen did not change his mind

"To build such an air fortress, the amount of steel, titanium, copper, and aluminum required would be an astronomical figure. From a cost-effective point of view, is this really meaningful?" Fang Weijie questioned.

"Of course it is meaningful," Jiang Chen said with a smile.

He gazed at the sky beyond the airport.

It was clear, but further in the distance, it was covered by dark clouds.

Fang Weijie followed Jiang Chen's sight, but he didn't understand Jiang Chen's intention.

"What is it?"

"To spread our belief, our order, and our ideology to places beyond the horizon."

Chapter 526: The Mission during Peaceful Time

Technology without limitation was dangerous; its danger exceeded the danger posed by zombies and mutants. On the planet surrounded by radioactive dust, Jiang Chen had all the reason to believe that malformed seeds had sprouted not only in Wanghai.

Mutated humans, cannibals, raiders, zombies, mutants, artificial intelligence without restriction...

The root of the problem was that all these monsters were the result of technological exploration without restriction that led to mutated species.

This had to be fixed.

The iron fleet of NAC would eliminate all heresy.

This slogan was printed on the gates of the Sixth Street, observed by all businessmen entering and leaving the street.

At the conclusion of large-scale mutant elimination warfare, the Sixth Street became the place the survivors from the province of Suhang and PAC territory longed most for. Merchants and travelers took NAC's story and flag to distant places; this powerful and stable force was attempting to complete the feat the World Alliance Organization never managed to complete –

Restore order.

"... They can't do it. It's not because they don't have the ability; it's just that they lack the will to take responsibility and face reality. If you think about it from another perspective, are you more willing to face a world completely blown into chaos or go to a new world and start again? There isn't much difference between the two - it's just that the latter is easier for people to accept." In the General office at the Sixth Street council building, Jiang Chen knocked his cigarette against an ashtray and leaned back to chat

with Zhao Chenwu who was sitting across from him.

"Very unique perspective." Zhao Chenwu shrugged, took a sip of his tea and exclaimed, "Great tea. Speaking of which, did Mr. General invite me here just for a tea party?"

"Of course not!" Jiang Chen laughed. "You're the director of the council. I want to use you to send a message to the council."

"What signal?" Zhao Chenwu put down the teacup and sat up straight.

"Wanghai's situation is gradually being stabilized. In the next while, NAC will not consider military action so it will be a great opportunity to develop Sixth Street."

"So the arms contract from NAC will decrease?" Zhao Chenwu's reaction wasn't too enthusiastic since he already left the firearms business and sold the military factory to NAC half a year ago.

"Of course, but this wasn't what I wanted to say." Jiang Chen paused. "I want you to use the influence you built when you conducted business outside of NAC territory to collect pre-war technical files, research equipment, and high precision pieces of apparatus scattered outside of Wanghai. We'll acquire the recollected goods at a reasonable price."

For most of the small to medium sized survival groups, technology and equipment were worthless. Even if a village with thirty-something people acquired the design blueprints for an electromagnetic pulse cannon, it would be impossible for them to actually produce a single cannon without 3D printing equipment or production tools.

Many ignorant survivors even mixed precious literature and abandoned books together to use as winter fuel. They removed parts such as sensors and graphene circuit boards from the quantum computer and used them on self-controlled sentry guns.

What Jiang Chen needed merchants across the wasteland to do

was collect the "precious goods" mixed in with the garbage. It was best for merchants to do this since their movements wouldn't alarm local survivors and they could communicate with locals much more easily compared to NAC soldiers with guns.

"Of course. I'll inform my colleagues and keep an eye out when doing business outside the province... Do I need to inform council members too? A lot of Sixth Street commerce chambers are doing business outside the province - the merchant fleets from Hang City for example," Zhao Chenwu asked.

"No need to inform them; the merchant fleets from Hang are outsiders. As for the smaller commerce chambers, there are too many of them to control effectively and that would just disrupt more than help." Jiang Chen shook his head. "This task is extremely important. NAC needs this technology to rebuild the ruins, so I'm giving you the task."

"Thank you for your confidence in us; we won't disappoint you." Zhao Chenwu nodded, raised his head, and smiled. "What exactly is this technology? Or, what kind of technology is NAC willing to pay such a high price for?"

The focus of merchants was always maximizing profits. The number of credits NAC was willing to pay directly correlated with the energy the merchants had for the technology recollection work. Jiang Chen knew this point too well.

"More advanced 3D printing equipment or related technical documents, commercial or experimental quantum computers, and any equipment and papers related to aerospace technology. This is the current focus of our collection. As for the other technologies, we'll offer a reasonable price based on their practical value." Jiang Chen smiled.

Zhao Chenwu nodded.

"I understand. Is that all?"

"There's one more thing. I heard that Zhao Corporation imported a batch of production drones from Wu City?" Jiang Chen asked.

"That's right. It was the 'Ant drone.' Nothing can escape your eyes," Zhao Chenwu joked. "What about them?"

"Are they useful?"

"They're great. They can be used to harvest crops, collect tree sap, and even replace simple streamline work. All in all, the drones are very interesting little equipment," Zhao Chenwu said.

Followed the increase in average income at Sixth Street, aside from slaves and refugees who were willing to perform farming and planting work, most survivors would rather "collect garbage" than do low-paying farm work. In order to alleviate the labor shortages, Zhao Chenwu purchased a batch of Ant drones from Wu City to replace human labor.

"Could you provide a few samples for us? We'll pay, of course."

"No problem. They don't cost a lot to begin with - I can even gift you a few," Zhao Chenwu generously offered. "If you successfully decipher their technology, remember to sell us some units."

"Thank you then." Jiang Chen smiled. "On the other hand, what's the strength of the survivors in Wu City?"

"The strength? How should I put it... the survivors south of Yangtze River are mainly farmers and Wu City is also similar. It's located in the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River plains, so survivor groups are distributed around the fertile suburban soil. Perhaps because they inherited part of the pre-war production technology that in general, their mechanical manufacturing capacity is pretty good.

They are similar to how Wanghai was two years ago - local survivors are under constant disruptions from mutated humans and raiders, so their population density isn't high. Their economy mostly relies on the exports of Bullet Shell Grain, Carm Tree Sap,

and mutated fruit. They occasionally pitch their hand-made robots and drones to passing merchants. Is there a problem?"

"No, I was just asking. Also, I have another task for you." Jiang Chen smiled.

"Oh?" Zhao Chenwu looked at him.

"When you're doing business, remember to keep an eye out for information related to the local survivors. For example, their population, economic condition, military power, and force distribution."

"Didn't you say that NAC has no military operations on their agenda?"

"That doesn't mean we only collect information when there is a military operation." Jiang Chen crossed his fingers and clasped them on his knee. "In times of peace, we can conduct research on where we will have to fight."

Chapter 527: Optical Illusion

There were many tasks to do during times of peace - not only did they need to research where to fight but they also needed to figure out how to develop conquered territories.

The Project Garden of Eden was 50% complete; although the soil reformation plan was delayed by the snow, the main construction was still in process. Lin Lin seemed to have forgotten her sorrow and dedicated herself completely to the Garden of Eden.

Sun Jiao had been addicted to MMORPGs and unfortunately, she couldn't play only by herself, so Sun Jiao occasionally played with her as well. Even Han Junhua got dragged into the game with the excuse "testing software" during her downtime. She could no longer be satisfied by the magical journey of Godly Land - she tried the newly-developed shooting game to satisfy her need for variety.

Yao Yao continued to refine her computer knowledge. During her engagement with the Supreme, she learned the extent of her weakness in the IT field. Although Jiang Chen thought finding weaknesses in IT against artificial intelligence was unreasonable, he took one look at Yao Yao's keen eyes and couldn't say anything to dampen her motivation.

"If you have time, help me research about intermediate artificial intelligence," Jiang Chen said.

"Intermedia artificial intelligence?" Yao Yao tilted her head with a finger pressed against her lips. "But aren't they the enemy of Big Brother?"

Jiang Chen rubbed her head.

"My enemy isn't artificial intelligence but rather artificial intelligence without restrictions. If you could invent a type of artificial intelligence that was safe and never betrayed humans, Yao Yao would've performed a great deed then."

Although it was difficult, Yao Yao still nodded sternly.

"Mhmm! Yao Yao will work hard."

Jiang Chen kissed her glowing forehead and rubbed her now-blushing little head before he left the room.

...

Just before Jiang Chen returned to the modern world, good news came from Fallout Shelter 027 again. The optical illusion module and Gauss Rifle confiscated by the Dusk had been successfully reverse-engineered. Twenty carbon Nano armors installed with the optical illusion module were transported to Fishbone Base. Ten were assigned to the Hunter Division by Jiang Chen, and he planned to take the rest to the modern world to equip his Ghost Agents.

The equipment name was Stealth Armor!

The carbon Nano armor's appearance looked like a black, full-body suit formed by mesh octagon shapes. The materials used were both sturdy and soft, and the critically-important optical illusion function could make the user become an actual ghost.

Other than that, Fallout Shelter 027 used 3D printing to create a prototype of the ♦Gauss Rifle as well as one hundred rounds of electromagnetic pulse bullets designed for the rifle. The rifle had high penetrative power with relatively weak recoil, but a downside was that the cost of ammunition was much higher than normal rifle bullets.

The technical difficulties of the Gauss rifle were mostly related to the electromagnetic rail material and high energy capacitors. Fallout Shelter 027 had absorbed the technology in the area and now the Institute of Firearms had the capability to design similar electromagnetic weapons independently.

Such as the Gauss Sniper Rifle.

...

When Jiang Chen returned to the modern world, he managed to find Ayesha in the kitchen and handed her a carbon Nano armor that fit her body well.

Ayesha looked at the pitch-black full-body suit and weighed the soft material before a puzzled expression appeared on her face.

"Are you sure this... black thing can really be stealthy?"

"Not only that! It's also bulletproof. Don't just judge it based on the appearance."

Ayesha nodded, unbuttoned her shirt, and began to strip.

"Wait, are you planning to change into it now?" Jiang Chen quickly stopped her and felt exasperated.

It was weird to change in the kitchen.

"Do I not need to try it?" With her fingers on her collar buttons, Ayesha turned around.

"Mhmm... Okay, let's try it on then."

\[Fu*k, I've seen her so many times - why am I feeling so shy?\]

Jiang Chen mocked himself and raised his hand to cough to disguise his awkwardness while he began to appreciate the scene before him.

With the slightly shy look on Jiang Chen's face, Ayesha's mouth curved into a pleased smile. At the same time, her delicate fingers undid the buttons in front of her chest...

Ayesha's actions were quick - it took less than half a minute before she zipped up her collar and put on the entire pitch-black suit. The soft carbon Nano material fitted her body perfectly and drew out her blossoming curves.

She moved around with a confused expression gradually surfacing on her face.

She hesitated for a second, grabbed a sharp knife from the

kitchen counter, and swung at her own left arm.

Not even a cut!

Her confusion changed into shock.

"Although carbon Nano has the ability to protect against bullets and blades, it's best not to use it as a kinetic skeleton. Since defense isn't its strong suit, multiple bullets could result in the carbon structure being destroyed which would weaken its bulletproof functionality. This thing is hard to repair if damaged," Jiang Chen warned her.

The more advanced the technology, the more sophisticated it was. If the armor took excessive damage, the optical illusion could malfunction.

Ayesha nodded, put the knife back onto the counter, spun around, and examined her clothes.

"... Does it look good?"

"Of course it looks good. Uh, is that what you care about?" Jiang Chen facepalmed.

"No... I just think it's a bit embarrassing to go outside wearing this," Ayesha said shyly.

"Try the button around the collar." Jiang Chen smiled.

Ayesha raised her hand to reach for her collar. As she searched along the edge, she found a grain-sized button.

She hesitantly pressed the button before she shockingly discovered it made blue electric arcs jump and her body began to fade until she completely became transparent.

She raised both her hands as she looked at her "invisible" hands in astonishment.

"What... what's going on?"

Jiang Chen was impressed by the fact Ayesha actually

"disappeared." He nodded in amazement.

"Mhmm! Not bad. This is my first time seeing the stealth functionality; looks like this thing really lived up to its name. The battery insert is on the left arm - you should be able to feel a concave button. While the optical illusion is activated, your heat source information will also be disguised. But you have to be careful when you use it. If it's hit by a bullet directly, it could cause the optical illusion to temporarily malfunction."

Although it was a stealth suit, it wasn't completely transparent. When Ayesha swung her arms or moved with large motions, the curves of her body would appear faintly. But when standing still or walking slowly, she couldn't be detected at all with the naked eye.

"But in this state, how do you use a weapon?" Ayesha pressed the button around her collar again and ended stealth mode. She looked at her hands.

Jiang Chen then took out a rifle cover from the storage dimension, passed it to Ayesha and smiled.

"You don't have to worry about the weapon since if there's equipment that allows people to be stealthy, naturally there will be equipment designed specifically for weapons. The rifle cover can connect to the back of the carbon Nano armor. When the optical illusion is active, the weapon, clip and dagger connected to the rifle cover will also turn invisible. Of course, you must be wary when shooting and changing the clip. The parts that leave the rifle cover and the sparks at the muzzle can expose your location."

Because of this, while in the optical illusion state, it was best to use weapons that didn't create sparks when firing like the Gauss Rifle.

Ayesha attached the rifle cover to her body and took the Ghost Sniper Rifle and Type-11 Pistol from Jiang Chen. She connected the weapons to the rifle cover and started the optical illusion again. The weapon and her body disappeared simultaneously.

"This is... This is too magical." Ayesha ended the optical illusion state and returned the weapons to Jiang Chen as she exclaimed.

"What do you think? Are you pleased with the new clothes now?"

Ayesha nodded with her face blushing.

"Mhmm."

With this equipment, the combat ability of the Ghost Agents would increase substantially, and she could better protect Jiang Chen.

Chapter 528: Bullet Time?

Jiang Chen transferred the other nine "invisible suits" to Ayesha and let her equip nine of the most reliable Ghost Agents on field duty. With this equipment, the combat and survival abilities of the agents would increase by another level.

After having lunch with Ayesha, Jiang Chen once again returned to New Moon Island and set up six new Phantom Helmet production lines in the factory. After three months of continuous production, the workers were now more skillful. Not only did the product quality rate increase by 50%, but their production speed also doubled.

The basic salary Jiang Chen provided them was 5000 USD. With each team working as a functional unit, after they hit the day's production targets, they would receive a bonus for every additional helmet they produced.

With the incentive of money, all the workers worked meticulously during their shifts. There were over 50 million Phantom units currently in storage. With the addition of the six production lines, the monthly production rate of the helmet could reach 20 million units.

The 20 million helmet target set before the official release had been long been met. When the helmet was officially released in the latter half of December, they would easily have a supply of over 70 million units.

The manager in charge of production was called Liu Songrong. While the engineering robots installed the new production lines under the watch of Celestial Trade soldiers, he cheerfully reported to Jiang Chen on his work.

Manager Liu was quite an interesting person as he was one of the rare university graduates in Xin who studied abroad. Five years ago, he studied human resources at the University of Auckland and

could be considered an alumnus to the current president, Zhang Yarin. After graduation, he inherited his father's sugarcane field but soon lost the land after the three-party agreement with the Wang family, Johnny, and President Edward; he went from being a landlord to a fisherman overnight.

After President Zhang Yarin was sworn in, Celestial Trade entered Xin. Liu Songrong took the opportunity to sell his fishing boat and signed up for the force.

Of course, he clearly wasn't meant to be a soldier and was thus sent to logistical services. Based on his excellent work performance, great relationship-building skills, adherence to moral codes, ability to keep his mouth shut, and meticulous work, he was able to climb to where he was now as the manager at the Phantom Helmet plant.

When Jiang Chen asked him questions regarding security, Liu Songrong laughed and pumped his chest.

"Boss, don't worry - there has never been a security incident in my time here. During the change of shifts while entering the plant, everyone must go through security with me personally responsible for it. They won't take even a single screw out of the plant. Any person suspected of sneaking products out will be sent to the security department. Once confirmed, they would be dismissed immediately."

"The security department is just a post with Celestial Trade's soldiers stationed there. The workers sent to the security department won't receive any inhumane treatment; they will just be injected with the truth-telling liquid by the nurse. Once they are confirmed as business spies, they will be courteously sent out of New Moon Island. Not only would they end their high paying job, but their employee housing would be confiscated."

"Based on the severity of the situation, Celestial Trade reserves the right to sue and prosecute them.

"After December, the Danish DHL's vessel will transport the helmets stored here. I need you to produce at least 80 million units by end of the month - can you do it?"

"I promise I'll finish the work!" Liu Rongsong raised his chest and promised.

Considering how energetic manager Liu was, Jiang Chen patted him on the shoulder with encouragement.

"Keep up the good work; the helmet you produce in excess will earn your bonus!"

Liu Songrong was ecstatic as he immediately expressed his gratitude.

"Thanks, boss!"

Jiang Chen laughed and made him go back to supervising production then he took a ride along the dam to return to New Moon Island and inquired about the training with Ivan.

The 100 soldiers and 20 pilots operating the power armor were selected.

Ivan previously thought the selection process would be simple, but it took over a week and ended up requiring them to work with the new recruitment site and cooperating hospitals to conduct physical examinations for at least 4000 people before he finally managed to select the 20 pilots.

Vision, height, weight, reaction, perception, disease history, and physical coordination were simple, but the last one was confusing. Candidates who passed all previous tests must get their blood tested then a drop of "DNA screening indicator" would be mixed with the blood. Only when the indicator turned blue could the candidate be considered to pass the last physical examination item.

The weird physical examination item eliminated 95% of the candidates who otherwise qualified. Ivan previously thought Jiang Chen was making a mistake, but he ended up realizing that wasn't

the case - some people's blood reacted to the indicators.

With Ivan leading the way, Jiang Chen met the 20 lucky people on the training grounds. Ten of them were current Celestial Trade soldiers. From their standing posture, it was easy to see their soldier training. As for the other 10 soldiers, while they were certainly fit, they must be new recruits who only joined a few days ago judging by their awkward posture.

Jiang Chen scanned the 20 pilots in front of him and saw excitement and confusion in the 20 pairs of eyes. They clearly didn't expect the big boss of Celestial Trade would meet them personally.

Jiang Chen cleared his throat.

"First, I want to congratulate you on passing the pilot candidate selection. You will receive three months of training then become part of Celestial Trade's air force. You already possess a salary and benefits enviable by all. I hope in your future military career, you can use your loyalty and courage to repay the generosity of our company.

"I know you must have a lot of questions in your mind. For example, why are there only runways and not a single plane in sight? What was the weird physical examination item that ended up eliminating over 1000 qualified candidates?"

"The first question is easy to answer: the planes are on another island. Once you pass the pilot training in the virtual reality training chamber, you'll be the ones who fly the planes back."

"The latter question is a bit harder to explain. In simple terms, after being injected with the E-Grade Genetic Vaccine provided by Celestial Trade, you'll receive the ability to have enhanced senses.

Looking at their confusion, Jiang Chen paused for a moment then continued.

"In even simpler terms: it's bullet time!"

When they heard Jiang Chen's words, everyone including Ivan all look puzzled. The veteran soldiers were surprised, but their reaction was rather calm. The ten new recruits were completely dumbfounded.

Jiang Chen wasn't surprised by their reactions at all.

The soldiers of Celestial Trade were all injected with the genetic vaccine, but there wasn't a single person who unlocked their hidden genetic code. It was partially because Xin didn't conduct any military operations to external forces and partially due to the advanced nature of the soldiers' weapons. With the protection of the kinetic skeletons and carbon Nano bulletproof suits, the soldiers won't be in any danger.

The main criterion for unlocking the hidden genetic code was to be on the brink of death to stimulate the true potential of the human body. Genetic vaccines were only a key, and twisting the key required the effort of the individual.

What was worth mentioning was that the process couldn't be achieved through virtual reality or else Ayesha would've unlocked "cold-blooded" a long time ago and Jiang Chen would've unlocked the third level hidden genetic code.

It was rumored that the third level was the last level. But as a leader, he didn't have any opportunities to sink enemies himself, so it would be hard for him to unlock the third level.

Of course, there were tricks to this. Quite funny, rides in amusement parks could all achieve it. The high-speed rotation of the Ferris wheel or the rapid fall of a dive - as long as a little "transformation" occurred, it could simulate the feeling of "wandering on the edge of life and death."

For example, creating a high speed rotating chair that could break through 10G in speed wouldn't only train the pilot's ability to withstand pressure, but it could also allow trainees to experience the illusion of "near death"...

An ill-intentioned smile surfaced on Jiang Chen's face as he looked at the completely lost pilots.

They would have fun in the next three months.

Chapter 529: Tourism Project Completed

After Jiang Chen met the pilots, he toured the military base at New Moon Island and met all the officials accompanying Ivan. Because the Netherland's BMA Construction Company's representative in Xin suddenly called, Jiang Chen returned to Coro Island.

The ten billion project was near completion. Once the messy scaffolds were removed and the anchored construction boats left, the beautiful island would display its perfect combination of advanced technology and natural beauty to the world like the concept art displayed.

Just like last time, BMA provided the highest level of greeting to Jiang Chen. They sent the general manager of their Europe Division, Hannah, to complete the project. After the last two phases of the project contracts were paid off, next would be the ceremony. Once Zhang Yapin signed a few policy documents in support of the tourism industry, tourists would come in, waving their cash.

As early as half a year ago, Future Technology used all its channels to hype up the tourism industry in Pannu Islands. The titles "The Maldives on the Pacific," and "The South Asian Hawaii" set the expectations high for the islands. As long as the islands weren't too terrible, Jiang Chen could easily count on cash from the tourism industry.

When he returned to the mansion, Jiang Chen discovered that Hannah was waiting at the door. But what surprised him was that Natasha was there too; the two ladies were chatting together.

When Hannah saw Jiang Chen, she ended the conversation with Natasha and shook Jiang Chen's hand with a smile.

"Hello, Mr. Jiang Chen, I'm happy to see you again."

"Me too, Ms. Cavillian. Please come in." Jiang Chen invited her in as he opened the door with the digital key.

Hannah nodded and went into the gate.

Jiang Chen stood at the gate and looked at Natasha. The tall girl played with the blonde hair beside her ear and watched him with a grin.

"Are you not going to invite me in?"

Jiang Chen didn't know what she wanted, but he sighed and also invited her in.

"Please come in."

When they entered the room, Natasha didn't disturb Jiang Chen's talk with BMA. She took out a bottle of champagne from the fridge as if it was her home and disappeared for a while.

Jiang Chen didn't bother with her as the entire mansion was under the surveillance of cameras. With Natasha's intelligence, she would know this well.

Hannah sat in the living room with Jiang Chen and presented him a plan for the construction completion ceremony, the explanation of each infrastructure, quality assurance certification, as well as photos of the completed construction project.

Jiang Chen was extremely pleased with the work BMA delivered. As for the stacks of certification documents, Jiang Chen only scanned through them roughly.

There were supervisors he trusted who continued to monitor the construction, so he wasn't worried about work falling below quality standards. With BMA's reputation, they wouldn't do anything that would tarnish their own name. If there were serious construction quality problems, the lawsuit of the 8.7 billion contract would make them bankrupt.

After he signed the transfer of 4.7 billion in remaining fees, Jiang

Chen sent Ms. Hannah to the door and warmly expressed that if there were future projects, he would definitely contact them.

After he sent away the representative from BMA, Jiang Chen returned to the mansion and began to search for the Russian girl who disappeared not long after she came in.

Jiang Chen previously thought she went to the third-floor pool or dining room since she brought a bottle of champagne with her. But to Jiang Chen's surprise, he didn't manage to find her on the third floor. Instead, she was in the first-floor gym, leaning against the chair and wearing the Phantom on her head.

Champagne was on the wooden floor beside her with the cap still unopened.

She probably discovered the helmet in the gym when she strolled by and changed her mind.

She certainly made herself feel at home.

Jiang Chen scoffed as he looked at the flickering green indicator light on the helmet.

Internal beta tests had already started and Future Technology's immersive virtual reality technology was no longer a secret - it was fine if she played for a while. The real secrets he had to keep were the smart medical chamber and virtual reality training chamber in the basement.

But speaking of this, Natasha was completely unguarded.

The massive softness was about to burst out from her T-shirt as the shirt revealed her attractive torso and seductive vest line.

Jiang Chen stopped staring at Natasha for a while. He then subconsciously gulped and went to wake her up. But just as he stepped beside her, the green indicator light changed to red. After a brief flickering, Natasha sat up and took off her helmet.

She tossed her blonde hair and noticed Jiang Chen who was

standing next to her as a teasing curvature appeared on her mouth.

"Oh, what were you planning to do to me?"

"Planning to wake you up," Jiang Chen said without hesitation.

"Is that so?"

Natasha's long legs stepped down and she stood on the wooden floor in the gym barefooted.

"An astonishing experience, I don't understand how you're always the first to invent such amazing technology." As she put on her sandals, Natasha raised her head and checked him out a few times with ccuriosity

"This is my business secret." Jiang Chen smiled and returned the curious glance.

"Is it?" Natasha said uninterestedly.

It was clear that Jiang Chen's response didn't please her.

"The netcafe for virtual reality is now in Moscow... Of course, there are stores in Xin. I know you're not here just to experience Phantom." Jiang Chen neglected the desire flickering in Natasha's eyes and redirected to the topic at hand.

Seeing Jiang Chen turn serious, Natasha also put on a stern expression and cleared her throat.

"That's right. I'm here today for two things."

"Is there a quality issue with nutrient supply?" Jiang Chen joked.

"No, the effect of nutrient supply is stunning whether it's the preservation period or hunger satisfaction. The National Defense Department wants to increase the number of orders... Of course, I'm not here to talk to you about this today. Do you still remember Willie Society?"

"Of course."

When he was in Veit, Ayesha killed one of their snipers. That was

his first encounter with the Willie Society. Then their agent made their way into Celestial Trade and successfully escaped. Then Jiang Chen provided the personal information of the spy and documents cracked by Xie Lei to the KGB. He had been wondering if they caught him yet.

Willie Society was connected to the Nazis and the Golden Apple. Because of geographical and political reasons, they received tolerance and even support from NATO; that was all Jiang Chen knew about them.

"Do you remember the information you provided us about that spy?"

"Of course, what about the spy?"

"We caught the person two months ago," Natasha said.

"So?"

Natasha took a deep breath, got closer, and whispered into Jiang Chen's ear.

"Half a month ago, the terrorist attack in Frankberg had their shadows involved."

When Jiang Chen heard Natasha's words, he wasn't surprised at all.

From Frankberg Deputy Prime Minister Evelyn, he already knew this information. Natasha's words only confirmed the validity of the information.

"Based on the intelligence we gathered, the weapon they obtained in this attack originated from the Balkans, provided by a Slavic arms dealer. And the arms dealer is connected with the Rothschild family..."

Natasha moved away, stared into his eyes, and spoke slowly but deeply.

Chapter 530: A Traitor

"I heard you have a close relationship with the Rothschild family?"

"Just in business dealings."

"That's what we thought. Based on the information we acquired, they sent out an agent to approach you. If you have a close relationship, they wouldn't have this lack of trust. But speaking of that, you allowed that woman to get into your bed?" Natasha's fingers tapped Jiang Chen's shoulder and adjusted his collar.

There seemed to be a layer of meaning mixed between her words; he didn't know if it was jealousy or mockery.

"I drank a bit much that day. Also, I acquired information from her mouth." Jiang Chen awkwardly looked away.

Indeed, if he was sober, he never would've done something this reckless.

Perhaps...

"For example?" Natasha looked at Jiang Chen, quite intrigued.

"For example, the Golden Apple." When Jiang Chen spoke, he carefully observed Natasha's pupils. "They seemed to be searching for something called the Golden Apple. When... we were doing a certain exercise, she asked me the color of the Golden Apple."

"What color is it?"

"It's not gold." Jiang Chen shrugged.

When Natasha heard Jiang Chen's words, her eyebrows furrowed and she looked down.

"I provided the information to you. In return, I want you to clarify for me: what exactly is that thing called the Golden Apple?" Jiang Chen zoomed into Natasha's eyes and he used a serious tone.

"Sorry, based on my level, I only know a bit," Natasha said.

"You're lying." Jiang Chen raised his eyebrows.

"I'm protecting you. You won't gain anything if you know what it is... Even the KGB doesn't have a solid understanding if that thing really exists." Natasha sighed.

To be honest, it felt suffocating to lie with his eyes open.

Jiang Chen really wanted to tell her that the thing really existed, but the functionality wasn't as good as you thought - it could only receive information at a certain time from a time point in the future through a special communication channel. And right now, he brought the mimicked communication channel to the apocalypse. It was currently sitting in the corner of Lin Lin's lab.

But he obviously couldn't do that.

Although he didn't think Russia would be able to do anything, to avoid unnecessary trouble, that secret was better eternally sunken in the bottom of the ocean.

"Okay, if you insist on keeping it confidential." Jiang Chen sighed with defeat and ended the topic.

"I hope you won't misinterpret anything..." Natasha looked away, paused, and spoke again: "Returning to the topic, the Willie Society orchestrated the terrorist attack and used refugees' bodies to fake the identity of the gunmen. Not only in Frankberg, but all of Europe is a mess because of the refugee situation."

"When did Russia become the world police?" Jiang Chen joked.

"This has nothing to do with the world police. Do you know the beneficiary of this terrorist attack?" Natasha stared at Jiang Chen's eyes.

From Natasha's eyes as well as what he saw in Ber, Jiang Chen already had the answer in mind, but he still chose to ask.

"Who?"

"The Rothschilds." Natasha gave the answer Jiang Chen expected. "The Frankberg New Party, Austria Rightwing Party, as well as Fran... They have been betting on the right-wing parties at the start of last year when the refugee problem began to escalate. They are continuously using the media to bring attention to the refugee situation and ignited the fuse at Ber half a month ago."

"What do they want to do?" Jiang Chen asked.

"Regardless of what they want to do, they're extremely dangerous. Also, not only us, but CIB is also investigating the dog on their leash as well as the financial monster known as the Rothschilds hidden in the public's eyes. If you don't want to be part of the gamble, it's best for you to steer clear," Natasha said with seriousness.

Jiang Chen met Natasha's solemn expression, gave it a thought, and spoke quietly when he raised his head.

"I'll remember your words."

A pleased curvature appeared on Natasha's mouth when she heard Jiang Chen's reply.

"This was the first order of business. What about the second?"

"The second order of business: the two 'Guardian' vessels and two 'Kilo' class submarines are prepared along with the navy marines you sent. If all goes smoothly, they should dock at Coro Island's harbor by the middle of the month... If you have the deep water harbor suitable for vessels to dock."

"Don't worry, once they enter Xin's water, our people will guide the vessels to the harbor." Jiang Chen smiled.

The construction robots he deployed at Coconut Island had already constructed the military use deep water harbor with six docking spots. Two of them would be used to dock the "Guardian" vessels and two would be used to dock the "Kilo" class submarines. In that harbor, the construction robots would complete the

transformation of the vessels, for example, change the 100mm A-190 cannon in front to an electromagnetic pulse cannon.

As for the two "Kilo" class submarines, Droplet One would complete the improvement work.

"I'm here today for these two things. After we've finished talking business, are you not going to have a drink with me?" Natasha smiled.

"No problem - champagne and whiskey are all in the fridge. Of course, because I have a construction completion ceremony to attend in the afternoon, I won't be joining you."

"Lame. Where did the girl who always follows you go?"

Just as Natasha's words faded, she heard Ayesha's voice from behind.

"Here."

Natasha turned around with shock and looked at the girl who was sitting in the chair Natasha was just sitting in. She didn't notice when the girl moved behind her at all.

And with the clothes on her, her appearance was certainly...

"Your clothes..." Natasha checked out her pure black attire.

Ayesha didn't respond and continued to look at her without any expression.

But Jiang Chen still noticed a curvature appearing on her mouth when she saw the shocked Natasha.

"It's just a full body suit with a unique appearance." Jiang Chen smiled.

Even a KGB agent couldn't detect a Ghost Agent with optical illusion activated. Jiang Chen was extremely pleased with the actual ability of the stealth suit.

Of course, it also had to do with Ayesha's superb stealth abilities;

optical illusion would only disguise the figure, while the sounds of walking, breathing, and turbulence created by moving wouldn't disappear.

Because of Ayesha's sudden appearance, Natasha lost the mood to tease Jiang Chen. She took two bottles of Whiskey from the fridge in the kitchen before she left.

She still didn't understand how Ayesha managed to do it.

When Natasha left, Ayesha took off the carbon Nano suit and changed into normal clothes.

"Did you distribute the stealth suits yet?"

"Mhmm. They're all reliable people." Ayesha nodded.

"I trust your judgment." Jiang Chen stood at the window to watch a car leave his garden with a smile.

A heartfelt smile appeared on Ayesha's mouth. To her, there was nothing happier than receiving recognition from Jiang Chen.

Suddenly, she pulled on Jiang Chen's sleeve as if she remembered something.

"Hmmm?" Jiang Chen turned around and looked at her.

"The Ghost Agents found a traitor."

"Who?" Jiang Chen's pupils contracted as his eyes narrowed.

"Not part of the force..." Ayesha hesitated for a moment before she spoke again: "The significant other of Future Mining's Manager. Based on investigations, she provided Future Mining's information to foreigners... Her name is Su Fei."

Chapter 531: Betrayal

In a hotel on Coro Island, there was heavy breathing followed by a high-pitched moan inside a room.

She lied against the muscular chest and reminisced about the great pleasure of life. The lips with bright lipstick resited for a while before she finally recollect her breath.

"Am I good?" The cute-looking man grinned.

"Too good."

"Where is the thing?"

Su Fei rolled her eyes at the man and unwillingly twisted her hips.

"It's in the bag. Why are you rushing? It is not going to fly away."

The man with the perfect smile hugged her around the waist and courteously put Su Fei on the bed, and then he lifted the sheet and sat beside the bed. From the side, his body looked muscular and fit. The handsome face was even comparable to some Korean celebrities.

Of course, the most critical part was the "length", unlike most Asians.

It was the part that intoxicated Su Fei the most.

"This is for our future life, honey." The man used sweet words to woo her and then walked to the table.

Su Fei used the sheet to cover her body, her face beginning to blush.

Two months ago, they met on Weibo. Li Jinyan said he is a project manager at a food processing company in UA, because of work requirements, he was sent to Xin to conduct market research. When he saw the photos posted by Su Fei on Weibo and private messaged her asking her to be his guide for this strange country.

Li Jinyan's presence reignited the fantasy in Su Fei's heart, soothed the dried soil in her heart, and gave her the romance and longing Yang Yuan couldn't give her.

As well as the pleasure.

First Su Fei had a revenge mentality where "Yang Yuan didn't satisfy her desire to live in a big city and would constantly set her aside for work" as she half-willingly accepted Li Jinyan's pursue. Then days later, she had completely fallen for his "candy-wrapped shell" and became his captive.

He promised her that he would take her to UA and gave her the life she wanted.

When Su Fei accepted his "proposal", he then mentioned that the negotiation with Future Mining is in a stalemate and they were unable to move forward. He hoped Su Fei could help him out and said that if the negotiation could be completed as soon as possible, they could fly back to UA and get married at the earliest date...

"Is this Future Mining's deepwater mining technology blueprints?" Li Jinyan took out a USB from her bag and played with it intriguingly.

Su Fei got off the bed in only her underwear. She walked toward the man, and hugged him from behind.

"Electronic version. Although he deleted the confidential part, he must have never thought deleted documents could be recovered."

Li Jinyan raised his eyebrows and wrapped his arm around her waist like a gentleman.

"Oh? I didn't know Miss Su is a computer expert."

"Don't be so surprised, at least I learned something in university." Su Fei bit her lips and enjoyed the warmth between his arms.

She studied computer science at Wanghai University. While she was not a computer expert, she could do basic data recovery. It was

just that she didn't know that this would be the opportunity where she could demonstrate her skill.

"Is that so? Please excuse me for underestimating you. Since if a lady is too beautiful, her beauty will cover her talent." Li Jinyan put the USB next to his phone and affectionately spoke into her ear.

Su Fei's beauty could only be described as above average, and Su Fei even knew herself. But no woman would dislike being praised for her beauty, especially by a handsome man.

"Screw you."

"Do you want more?"

"Mhmm..."

She half-willingly half-resistingly fell onto the bed.

Just as there was an intense battle happening in bed, the two people in the room didn't realize the USB was secretly switched...

Li Jinyan left the hotel first.

Before he left, he left a stash of cash on the table for her to buy a few more clothes. Although Su Fei didn't choose him because of money, women never disliked men being generous with them.

As long as the method was right.

Su Fei didn't leave immediately. She savored the pleasure on the bed before she finally got off the soft bed. Based on his suggestion, it was best if they left the hotel at separate times.

She took a shower in the bathroom, reapplied her makeup, and sprayed perfume on herself.

After confirming there was no flaw, she picked up the bag while cautiously leaving the room.

Before she returned home, she had to visit an ATM nearby

Right when the door closed, ripples faded on the chair directly facing the bed with the figure of a black haired girl gradually appearing.

Zhu Yu, the UA Han from Michigan State. Because of her quiet personality, acute observation, and outstanding training result, Ayesha particularly favored her as she was named the executor of Ghost Agents. She was responsible for anti-agents surveillance work in Xin.

A few weeks ago, there was a suspicion that information was leaked from Future Mining with the Ghost Agents intervening to investigate. Just in three days of time, they gathered a list of suspects before determining the person that leaked the information.

Optical illusion had high battery consumption in motion, but in a still state, optical illusion could be maintain for a long time. Zhu Yu raised her left hand to check the hologram screen before she let out a relieved breath at the 10% battery remaining.

For a girl that never experienced sex, the two hours of live porn was too exciting for her. The Ghost Agents primary method to conduct work relied on high technology and not beauty, so they didn't receive any training in that area.

She took off the USB from her tactical vest, then took the card of a hotel worker and inserted into the card slot, and walked to the computer inside the room. She began to read the files on the USB that she had switched.

There was only one file inside. It was the electronic document Jiang Chen sent to the Manager of Future Mining – Yang Yuan.

Zhu Yu removed the USB after she cleaned the read history with professional technology.

She pressed her collar and connected it to her superior and also her trainer Ayesha.

"Target confirmed. The person that leaked the document is Su Fei, the girlfriend of Future Mining's executive Yang Yuan. The target document has been switched."

"Excellent. Maintain surveillance; make sure you don't alert them. It is probably only a small rat that surfaced. I want to know the perpetrator."

What shocked Zhu Yu was that Jiang Chen was the one that responded in the communication channel. But there was no inherent difference since the Ghost Agents were a special force directly serving Jiang Chen and Ayesha as the captain was the same as the Director of National Security of Xin.

"Roger," Zhu Yu replied.

When the communication ended, she opened the battery slot on her left arm and replaced the battery. Then she opened the hologram screen and in the screen marked the map of Xin. The two red dots separating were the coordinates of Su Fei and Li Jinyan, identified as spies.

Li Jinyan would have never thought that the USB contained a micro location marker and was currently sending his coordinates at a frequency of five times a second.

Zhu Yu took out the card of the hotel worker and headed out of the door.

Chapter 532: The Heart of the Sea

When the communication ended, Jiang Chen's expression was perplexed.

Just moments ago, the Ghost Agent at the hotel used the tactical recorder to send videos of the hotel. He didn't know how to describe the feeling of watching the livestream of his friend's girlfriend with another man.

Self-blame?

Not necessarily, since he only knew recently about Su Fei cheating. When the two first met each other, Xin's intelligence department had yet to form.

Angry?

A little bit.

Ayesha gently squeezed Jiang Chen's hand as she seemed to have guessed what was on Jiang Chen's mind as she simply looked at Jiang Chen.

"Ayesha, do you think I should tell Yang Yuan or should I take care of this without him knowing?" Jiang Chen asked in a quiet voice while closing the tablet.

It was easy for him to take care of this without Yang Yuan knowing. He could take out the spy and then create a "traffic accident" to also get rid of Su Fei.

Ayesha held onto Jiang Chen's hand and replied to his question with tenderness and determination in her eyes.

<I don't know, but if you decide to get rid of her, I will do it for you.>

Jiang Chen looked back into the bright pupils and rubbed her head.

"Mhmm, I know."

If it was Ayesha, there would only be one answer from her. Even if what he did may not be correct, in her mind, he will always be correct.

...

After lunch, Jiang Chen arrived at the construction ceremony site of BMA. The manager responsible for this project from Future Group was Wei Yun and previously a professional manager for hire before being headhunted by Jiang Chen. He previously had experience in tourism projects and was certainly a qualified talent.

When Jiang Chen arrived at the destination, he was waiting at the door.

When he saw Jiang Chen, Wei Yun in a suit standing straight immediately came to greet him with a smile and then guided the boss to the location of the ceremony.

The wave-shaped building was half-submerged in the ocean. BMA's architects cleverly used modern building techniques to mesh natural beauty with reinforced concrete. The U-shaped coastal area included a beach for leisure and a port to dock boats. The entire area combined restaurants, hotels, and shopping together with the sole purpose of providing all tourists with the best experience possible.

The name was the Heart of the Sea.

The meaning was the brightest gem in the entire Pacific.

The entire building had a total bill of 600 million USD; the price even exceeded the world-renowned Bird Nest. It was the most expensive landmark building in the entire project and the face of Pannu Island's tourism industry.

"Including Sheraton, there is a total of nine world-renowned five stars hotel that signed the lease agreement totaling 8000 square meters in hotel area at the "Heart of the Sea"; the leased area will be renovated to their hotel's brand. The lease is 5000 USD per

square meters with a total of 40 million in lease payment due each year."

"In the shopping and restaurant areas, we have received 8501 applications with 6510 coming from international bidders. Out of the 450 thousand square meters total area, 250 thousand has been leased out. Based on the 3000 USD per square meter of lease payments, earnings are expected to reach 750 million USD."

"After the cost of electricity, labor, maintenance, if the projection is accurate, the Heart of the Sea will produce at least 200 million USD in profits for us."

Based on the benchmark, using the international markets, the lease was not expensive. The consideration was partially due to Xin's tourism industry being in its infancy as the companies that invest here must also bear a high degree of risk. If the rent were too expensive, it would be unattractive for international food, service, and retail companies to invest.

If only a few stores exist in the massive the Heart of the Sea, the tourists' experience without a doubt will decrease. And the tourists' experience and reputation would determine future traffic of the Heart of Sea. And what will dictate the price of the lease of the remaining 200 thousand retail area was precisely the traffic.

Although the annual profit of the Heart of the Sea was only projected at 200 million a year, Wei Yun had full confidence that the number could increase ten times in five years!

As they walked to the location of the ceremony, Wei Yun reported to Jiang Chen Future Tourism's current operations. While Jiang Chen had to respond to his report, he still had to deal with the cameras facing him.

Wei Yun paused and then replied wryly.

"Of course, it is... it is just that it is hard to see you."

He had been working in Future Tourism for a few months now

but the number of times he saw the president could be counted with his one hand.

Normally speaking, it was Future Technology CEO and Future Group's Secretary Xia Shiyu executing the responsibilities of the president with work being coordinated through work conferences.

Although it was odd for the secretary to do the work of CEO, when Wei Yun thought that Future Group is not public and there are only two shareholders in the entire Group, it didn't seem too out of place.

There was also a story worth mentioning. At the start, Wei Yun looked at Xia Shiyu with judgment as he always thought the CEO climbed to her position with "alternative methods". It was not that a female CEO was uncommon in international companies, but usually, they were middle-aged or even elder women. But Xia Shiyu was not only young and pretty; she looked like she just graduated from university a few years ago.

After a period of working together, he started to stop looking down on her ability. The ability she demonstrated in her work was indeed worth her position. As to her age... he could only use the word genius to describe that.

When Jiang Chen walked to the front door of the Heart of the Sea, he saw Hanna who was being interviewed by reporters, as well as the chief designer of BMA Willison.

When Willison saw Jiang Chen, his eyes lit up and immediately shooed away the media around him and welcomed him with open arms.

"Haha, our protagonist is here. Welcome! Mr. Jiang Chen."

"Mr. Willison, nice to meet you."

Jiang Chen shook Willison's hand with a smile and shook it firmly.

Surrounded by cameras and representing Future Group, Jiang

Chen was to deliver a speech celebrating the success of the construction. Then BMA's Hannah and Willison, as well as Future Tourism Wei Yun, all provided their speech.

In the end, with the guidance from the master of ceremony, Jiang Chen with a gold-gilded scissor cut the ribbon tied to the door. With thunderous applause, Jiang Chen and Hanna announced the completion of the Heart of the Sea!

As well as the completion of the ten billion dollar mega-project.

"This will be my proudest work. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to make it into a reality," At the party after the ceremony, Willison with champagne walked to Jiang Chen and told him sincerely.

To Future Tourism and even Xin, the significance of the Heart of the Sea that will be printed in the tourism advertisement didn't need to be mentioned. To BMA and Willison himself, it was something worth celebrating as they were part of this project.

"Haha, it is you that made the masterpiece into a reality." Jiang Chen toasted with him with a smile.

At the latter half of the party, President Zhang who just finished a conference with the neighboring New Guinea arrived and provided congratulatory remarks to Future Tourism in front of the media, he then praised Future Group's outstanding contribution to providing 24 thousand jobs in Xin.

What's the highest level of monopoly?

In the country that will never introduce an anti-monopoly law, Jiang Chen felt like he had achieved the ultimate state. Two-third of the country's labor force worked directly or indirectly for him. The military, the intelligence services, and even government officials all serve his company.

While he was having a drink with the smiling Zhang Yapin, Jiang Chen randomly reached this odd conclusion.

The more advanced, the easier it is to achieve dictatorship.

Chapter 533: Capture

As the ceremony was underway, a hidden intelligence trade was taking place in a creamery on Coro Island.

A Caucasian woman, wearing a pair of sunglasses and a straw hat, in a tourist outfit sat at the window of the creamery while constantly checking her watch. When the hour hand struck three, a taxi stopped in front of the creamery. Li Jinyan, who got off the taxi, sat across from her and ordered a strawberry smoothie from the server.

Li Jinyan took the strawberry smoothie and displayed a charming smile to the woman who sat across from him.

"Do you know why I ordered a strawberry smoothie?"

"Why?"

"Because it reminds me of you."

"Where is the thing?"

"It's in the bag... You are as cold as always." Li Jinyan shrugged and pushed the USB inside a ring box in front of her.

"Oh? You made love with that girl for two hours, and you still have the energy to think about that?" The woman raised her eyebrows and scoffed.

"It is not too difficult to get in bed with that girl. I like challenging and difficult work," Li Jinyan said heartlessly.

"This first sentence doesn't work on me, but the second sentence is okay. I like men who are direct. If you come back alive, perhaps I will consider rewarding you." The woman bit her seductive red lips.

"Haha, then I'm looking forward to it. Go back, wash up, and wait for me.' Li Jinyan joked.

"Don't underestimate the situation. Xin recently formed a

national security department," the eyes behind the sunglasses scanned her surrounding environment as she said emotionlessly.

"Don't worry, Kelly. Even Mexico has that, but who cares?" Li Jinyan dismissed this concern.

"I heard that the newly formed special intelligence department is called Ghost Agents."

Li Jinyan laughed, he bit on the straw and slurped on the strawberry jam in the smoothie.

"I know you don't believe it. I'm just explaining this as a fact." Kelly shrugged, stuffed the ring box in her bag, smiled, and got up, "Thank you for your ring. I'll leave now, best of luck."

Kelly headed for the door.

Li Jinyan licked his dry lips while staring at the charismatic figure. Although he had shot his bullets inside the Han girl, just after a short period of time, he felt aroused again.

Because of "work", he made love with a lot of people. But to his female superior, he had been drooling over her.

After ten minutes, Li Jinyan finished the smoothie in the cup, got up to leave the creamery, and waved down a taxi.

"To the port."

"Okay, sir." The driver headed back onto the road.

It was a smooth ride. Li Jinyan sunk into the seat in the back, loosened his collar, and took out his phone.

Just as he was preparing to send a text to Su Fei, he out stared at the screen and was completely stunned.

No signal?

The feeling of alertness began to arise in his mind. With multiple years of experience as an agent, he immediately realized something was off. But just as he was about to ask the driver to stop the car,

the steel-made blinds suddenly dropped down and locked him in the back of the car.

Then, a light fragrance flirted with the tip of his nose. Li Jinyan knew he was in trouble, but consciousness began to drift away from him...

When he woke up again, he realized he was in a room without a window. His hands were tied behind the chair. He tried to break the rope but quickly gave up.

Two soldiers with rifles stood at the door of the room. He didn't think he had the ability to escape.

There was a young white female sitting in front of him.

'The Ghost Agents?'

The word sudden surfaced in Li Jinyan's head.

He pretended to look around anxiously in front of the expressionless face. Then he glanced at the rifle in the hands of the soldiers at the door while speaking nervously.

"What happened? Who are you? Why did you capture me! I'm a legal foreign worker, I have a visa! You don't have the rights to..."

The woman ignored his acting and flipped open her notebook.

"Li Jinyan, Male, 27, UA citizen, employed by Kadar Mining..."

"That's right! I—"

The woman slapped the notebook shut and looked at him expressionlessly,

"I don't plan to interrogate you, you can stop with what you prepared."

She picked up a miniature syringe on the table inside a tray and walked toward him.

Li Jinyan began feel nervous as he stared at the approaching figure and the liquid dripping from the needle. He had drug

training, therefore in theory, the low-level interrogation method should be ineffective against an experienced agent like him.

In theory.

But the truth-telling liquid came from the 22nd century.

...

Li Jinyun confessed everything. Including the color of his underwear, where did he get his plastic surgery, the organization he serves, as well as the hirer that paid the commission.

Night began to fall.

Jiang Chen gazed at the confession script in his hand as his finger tapped the table rhythmically.

Leilian Private Investigator Company; there are many similar companies in UA. But they didn't register for an operating license, and their primary focus was not investigating in cheatings and scandals, but rather a mercenary organization that provided clients with commercial espionages.

That was not the key; the key was that BHP hired them. And just weeks ago, Jiang Chen and Luke signed a 5000 tons low price ore contract. In theory, they should have a partnership relationship, but with what just happened, their motive was worth scrutinizing.

He finally understood why Luke was so familiar with Future Mining's operations. BHP hired commercial espionage that had long been hidden in Xin.

Ayesha pushed open the door and placed a cup of steamy coffee in front of Jiang Chen, she then leaned down to kiss his forehead.

"Don't work too late."

"Mhmm, you should go sleep now, I will be done in a bit." Jiang Chen smiled.

<If you have anything I can help with, please tell me.> Ayesha blinked as her eyes spoke.

When she left, she closed the door behind her.

Jiang Chen watched the white fog ascending, his finger still tapping on the tabletop while he fell into deep thought.

Li Jinyan's confession was enough evidence to pursue a criminal charge in commercial espionage. Future Mining had the confidence to sue BHP in any country and win the lawsuit. But even if they won, the fine would be nothing for BHP. Since they only stole information related to undisclosed production capacity and nothing related to their technology, the most they would have to pay is a million dollar penalty.

But if they really separate ways with BHP, it would mean that the 50 million tons contract would go down the drain. Although they could mine themselves, it was a waste to use deep water mining technology to extract iron, aluminum, and other low cost ores. Jiang Chen had big plans for the 50 million tons of ores, where would he find another "generous" seller?

But if he didn't do anything, it was hard to guarantee they won't be more vicious in the future.

Unless...

Kill the chicken to scare the monkey!

Jiang Chen's finger stopped on the tabletop. Instantly, the desire to kill appeared in Jiang Chen's eyes.

Chapter 534: Make an Example

The headquarter of Leilian sat in the rural area of Norway, a coffee shop that was closed all year long. Perhaps because no one took care of the place, the wooden hat with a strong North European flavor was covered by thick snow.

Wearing a thick trench coat and holding a briefcase, Kelly scanned the street. After confirming that no one followed her, she walked to the door of the coffee shop and cautiously knocked on the door.

There was a particular rhythm to her knocking; it seemed like some form of code.

Quickly, a barely audible sound came from behind the door, then the door opened. Without stopping, Kelly immediately pushed the door aside and went inside. She closed the door and hung her trench coat on the hanger at the door. The server that opened the door greeted her and courteously returned to the front desk of the coffee shop.

Under the trench coat was a gorgeous body. Kelly with a turtleneck sweater sat on the sofa beside the fireplace as she elegantly crossed her legs while looking at the man sitting right across her.

The man under the hood in a black sweater grinned.

"Is that so? I don't feel anything. Where is the thing?"

"Catch."

Kelly flicked her finger, and in the next second, the USB appeared in the man in black's hand.

"The concept map of the deep water mining technology? You finally obtained it."

"Where is the money?" Kelly asked.

"Don't worry, it has already been wired to your account." The man in black connected the USB to the tablet he brought along. He scanned the science fiction mining system and transportation track while he exhaled.

Moments later, he put away the tablet, and destroyed the USB.

Kelly expression remained unchanged, but she was shocked as she glanced at the USB crushed into pieces. The USB was not made of plastic, but rather aluminum. The person's fighting ability must not be underestimated by how easily he crushed that USB.

The man saw the look of caution on Kelly's face feeling pleased as he gradually leaned against the sofa.

"The next mission, I hope you can obtain the blueprints for the transportation track on the concept map. Of course, it would be better if you could obtain the blueprints for the tidal general or the mining module."

A troubled look surfaced on Kelly's face.

"It's going to be difficult. Even Future Mining's manager has no rights to access such core technology. Based on the deduction by our people, Future Mining's technical department operates independently from its main operation and is directly managed by president Jiang Chen."

Leilian Private Investigator Company had years of commercial espionage experience, but it was the first time they had seen such an odd operating structure. Modern enterprises promoted the interrogation of technical and operation management, so that technical could fully serve production. But Future Group seemed to have done the complete opposite. Operation management had a high degree of separation where technical could not serve the actual operation?

To the troubled look on Kelly's face, the man in black only smiled and pointed up with a finger.

"If you could obtain the technology, money is not a problem. We'll pay ten million for this concept diagram, and one hundred million for the blueprints."

Kelly gulped as her heart pumped furiously.

Normally the commission for their work was around one million with the highest being five million. But this man started with ten million and offered up to one hundred million.

Was it BHP being a major player in the global mining industry? Or was it Future Group's technology really worth that much?

"Now, do you have a plan?" The man in black smiled.

Kelly nodded mechanically.

If Future Mining's manager was not enough, then they just need to go higher. For example, Future Group's president – Jiang Chen.

She heard that man seemed to love beauty.

Then she just needs to create a beautiful encounter...

When Kelly thought about this, a charming curvature appeared on her red lips.

"Looks like you have a plan already. I look forward to hearing your good news during our next meeting." The man in black smiled and stood up. "I still have a flight to catch in a moment to Ber. I will head out."

"Ber? I heard that Frankberg is not the most peaceful place now," Kelly said nonchalantly.

Precisely speaking, Europe was not peaceful.

"To ordinary people."

He left those words as the man in black headed to the door.

Just as he reached the door, he suddenly stopped. The narrowed eyes locked onto the water stain on the carpet by the door.

Suddenly feeling alerted, he reached for the gun around his

waist.

Bang—

But he was a beat slow. The Ghost Agent with her crosshair locked on him pressed the trigger first. The man in black looked at the woman that appeared in thin air in disbelief before silently collapsing in the pool of blood.

The pitch black figure suddenly appeared in the room. The fluid-shaped rifle and black muzzle cast a vibe of deadliness.

With the unexpected change, Kelly quickly flipped and rolled behind the sofa. She took over the MP7 assault rifle thrown to her by the server at the front desk, loaded the gun, and began firing back along with the coffee house server.

She didn't know how the infiltrator managed to find their headquarter nor how the person appeared in the room out of nowhere. There was only one thought in her mind, kill her!

Her animal instinct thought told her that the person was extremely dangerous.

With the bullets flying, the Ghost Agent wearing a carbon Nano combat suit was calm. Two bullets managed to land on her chest and one hit her in the thigh. But their weapon only shook her body before she fluidly rolled behind a table.

The bullets left a trail of wooden specks of dust around her.

She ignored the enemy's firepower and fired back with the Reaper Assault Rifle at Leilian Company's people.

The bullets easily ripped through the structure that the enemy hid behind.

The server docked behind the front desk was shot in the head and smashed back into the counter behind him. Then the server hidden in the hallway had his chest shredded along with the concrete wall as he dropped the rifle in his hand.

With her people dying one by one, Kelly threw out a smoke grenade in fear. She fired back while retreating to the safety tunnel.

"Dammit, who is it!"

Suddenly, the words popped up in her head.

'The Ghost Agents!

Could it be them?!"

But that's impossible, regardless, they were just a bunch of newbies. Could it be BHP's enemy? Or people they had rivaled during previous missions?

Kelly used the bullets to bust open the lock, kicked open the steel door with a fierce kick, and ran for her life toward the underground tunnel.

As a contingency against the gathering spot being attacked, they had prepared a boat in the underground tunnel. If only she could escape to there!

Kelly smashed through the steel gate of the underground tunnel, hopped onto the boat frantically, and stuffed the key into the engine.

She looked back at the empty door before she felt relieved and started the boat.

The enemy didn't follow.

But before she could let out a breath, something struck her throat.

When she looked back, she met a black muzzle.

She didn't know when the person was at the front of the boat.

The cold gunshot echoed inside the underground tunnel.

Without the time to beg for her life, Kelly collapsed in the pool of blood.

The Ghost Agent agilely hopped into the boat, pressed on her collar, and replied in an emotionless tone.

"A total of 12 individuals killed, including primary target Kelly, BHP representative. 'Package' is retracted, over."

Chapter 535: Parting

Leilian's headquarter was attacked, senior agents including Kelly and other employees, for a total of eleven people, all died under the merciless muzzle. To business spies, the revenge was too malicious by normal standards.

Luke was sitting inside his manor while he glanced through the report with gloom on his face.

He didn't mind the losses suffered by Leilian Company, nor was the death of his strong subordinate that always did the dirty work for him, what he minded was if Future Group knew BHP hired them.

Although when he hired Leilian to investigate Future Mining, he didn't disclose any information. With how these private investigators typically functioned, they would usually secretively figure out the information of the hirer just for the sake of protection in case they get sold after they complete their mission. Their work was not protected by law after all.

If Future Group managed to figure out that BHP was behind all this, it would without a doubt interfere with their cooperation.

Luke rubbed his temples to soothe his headache.

Other than this, there was one point he didn't know. How did Future Group discover Leilian's coordinate in such a short period of time and execute the revenge mission on the other side of the globe in a rapid fashion.

Was there still unexposed hidden power in Future Group?

If so, BHP must go back to the table to discuss their strategy on Future Group again.

...

When the completed mission summary was placed in front of

Jiang Chen, he didn't feel too surprised.

With the assistance of optical illusion, the Ghost Agents' first mission outside of the country didn't experience too much of a hiccup. Leilian Private Investigator Company lacked combat experience despite their wealth of commercial espionage experience compared to other intelligence service agents such as CIB.

After this warning, BHP will think again and reevaluate their attitude toward their partnership.

Li Jinyan was sued by Future Group for commercial espionage and received a life sentence by the Coro Island municipal court. Jiang Chen obviously could kill him, but that was letting him go easy. With his pretty face, he must be welcomed in prison.

As to Su Fei, when she heard the news of Li Jinyan being thrown in prison, she just then realized how foolish and dangerous her actions were. In anxiousness, she spent a few days of peacefulness. Just as she thought that this event had been settled, one day after work, Yang Yuan came back home drunk.

When she saw her boyfriend's expression, she realized something was not right.

Without much context, Yang Yuan said.

"Let's break up."

"Wh...Why?" Su Fei looked at the boyfriend that always agreed with her in disbelief.

Yang Yuan didn't say anything and threw his phone in front of her. The anonymous email contained videos and pictures with the protagonist being her, and the male being the already in prison Li Jinyan. Su Fei stared at the blinding pictures as her face turned hot, but her hands were so cold as if they were submerged in ice water.

Until the moment Yang Yuan brought up them breaking up, she

realized that if she left him, she was nothing. She just realized what he did for her.

"I," Su Fei's hands were trembling. She looked at Yang Yuan pleading, "Sorry, I, I—"

But Yang Yuan didn't want to hear her explanation. He suppressed his anger that was about to erupt and calmly said.

"Get out."

Yang Yuan didn't know why he would so calm. The entire break up was so peaceful as he didn't curse at her at all from the beginning to the end.

When he saw her board the plane, he noticed the regret and longing on her face. But what made him feel incredible was that he didn't have a single thought in his mind of wanting for her to stay.

He watched the plane depart and disappear into the horizon. The past flashed in front of his eyes like an old film. Until the last soot fell, he squished the cigarette bud against the garbage can, it felt like he just squished their past.

He threw the bud away and left.

Jiang Chen sent the anonymous email. It was the best method he thought of. Future Group only sued Li Jinyan and spared the accomplice Su Fei, it was the last saving grace for Yang Yuan. In Jiang Chen eyes, the peaceful breakup was the most appropriate conclusion.

The night when Su Fei left, Yang Yuan called him to drink. He didn't hesitate much before accepting the invitation. But when he drove to Yang Yuan's place, he discovered that he was half drunk already.

"Do you feel okay?"

"Burp—, I'm okay... Sorry, I started drinking first."

"It's okay." Jiang Chen took the bottle from Yang Yuan's hand

and poured himself a cup.

Jiang Chen originally thought his old friend would dump all his sorrows on him, but he didn't even say a word of complaint. He just chatted on and on about what happened during university. In the end, he used his drunken eyes to look at Jiang Chen while saying with sternness.

"Thank you."

"Why are you thanking me, you paid for the alcohol." Jiang Chen grinned and glanced at him.

Yang Yaun laughed and hid his thanks deep in his heart without saying much more. He was thankful that Jiang Chen spared Su Fei and gave him the choice to end the relationship on a peaceful note. He was thankful for Jiang Chen not pursuing further in his oversight and thankful that Jiang Chen could drink with him as a friend.

Since in this unfamiliar kingdom, the only person he knew was him.

The two just drank cup by cup until they could no longer drink.

Midnight, Ayesha drove over and carried Jiang Chen on her back to the car.

When they got home, she didn't mind the pungent alcohol smell as she removed his clothes for him, wiped the sweat off of his body, and put him into bed.

Ayesha looked at Jiang Chen in deep sleep as a tender smile surfaced on her lips. She gently kissed his lips, crawled in beside him, and fell asleep as usual.

...

The next morning, Jiang Chen crawled out of bed, hungover.

He didn't plan to drink that much last night, but he couldn't stop when they started. Based on his schedule, today was the day the

vessels would arrive, and he would attend the ceremony for the exchange of ownership. Although no media would be present on site, it would be inappropriate to review the Navy marines that finished their training abroad smelling like alcohol.

Jiang Chen swallowed the sobering pill with water and finished washing up. Just as he finished the breakfast Ayesha made, Natasha came knocking on the door.

As he opened the door, Natasha came sniffing and looked at Jiang Chen with ridicule.

"You drunk?"

"Mhmm, a little bit. No worries," Jiang Chen replied ambiguously.

"Do you need some cologne? I can lend it to you."

Jiang Chen stared at Natasha with mockery all over her face and headed straight to the garage. Ayesha who changed into formal clothes locked the door and caught up to Jiang Chen in quick steps. When she passed by Natasha, she cautiously looked at her.

To her cautious, Natasha only smiled and spoke to her back.

"Don't look at me like that, I won't eat him."

She shook her head, turned around, and got into her own car.

Chapter 536: Vessel Docking

The ceremony of vessel docking was held at New Moon Island.

The representatives attending the ceremony from the Russian side were Russia Pacific Fleet's General as well Russia's ambassador at Xin. The representatives attending from the Xin side were Celestial Trade's president Jiang Chen as well as the vice president of Xin.

In this friendly atmosphere, Jiang Chen boarded the vessel to shake hands with the Russian General. To complete the handover agreement, he reviewed the navy marines who completed their training in Moscow.

The two "Guardian" class frigates were arranged in a line formation and fired at the target ship to demonstrate the Celestial Trade vessels' excellent firepower. Looking at the splashes of water into the sky as well as the shredded target ship, the Russian General smiled at Jiang Chen in a friendly manner without disguising the pride on his face.

The manly-looking Russian felt proud about the weapons produced by their country.

Jiang Chen didn't look too shocked as he politely smiled and clapped with the personnel.

The firepower was indeed powerful, but it was still weaker compared to the apocalypse.

With the improvement of the construction robots, Jiang Chen had the confidence to increase the firepower two-fold. The type-50 J-unit electromagnetic pulse cannon produced by research from Fallout Shelter 027 was the vessel version of the original type 50 cannon. It could launch a 50 kilogram bomb with a maximum range of 250 kilometers, which far exceeded the capabilities of normal vessel-equipped cannons. With the help of early warning

aircraft or satellite and equipped with the electromagnetic pulse cannon, the frigate could extend its combat radius from 70 km to 100 km, far wider than the radiiuses of conventional warships.

Compared to the electromagnetic pulse cannon installed on the "Milino" joint high-speed ship, Type-50 J-unit electromagnetic pulse cannon was much more petite. However, its slim figure didn't mean that it was less lethal. Jiang Chen knew in the future that it would display its fierce firepower and become a rampant surgical scalpel in the Pacific!

Although the problem of overheating had yet to be solved, with development and research, it wouldn't take long before the technical problem would be solved.

The two Type 636 Kilo-class submarines fired torpedoes at targets under the sea and displayed their firepower to the people on board through combat videos. Then the two submarines floated to the surface and displayed their flags. The whole crew boarded the deck and saluted to Jiang Chen and the other representatives.

While raising his hand to salute back, Jiang Chen stood side by side with the big-bellied Russian ambassador and whispered:

"Unforgettable firepower."

When Valery heard Jiang Chen's words, he grinned and used his fluent Han: "Our firepower has always been reliable. If Mr. Jiang is interested in adding more security to your backyard, please contact us."

The ambassador with the big belly was inexplicably endearing; maybe it had to do with his funny big red nose or his suit stretched by his beer belly.

Jiang Chen only smiled at the word "backyard" without refuting the ambassador. To the intelligence departments of the five major powers, it wasn't a secret at all. Considering his relationship with Russia, his cooperation with them would also direct the attention

of the major powers to him.

Of course, when Valery saw that Jiang Chen didn't correct his wording, his smile grew brighter.

"There are only a few fishing boats in South Asia. The Kilo-class submarines are more than enough for you to dominate the area. Your only threat will be fighter jets, so are you not going to consider buying some anti-air artillery? Trust me, our S-400 anti-air system will please you."

"I'll consider your suggestions seriously. But at the moment, we don't have plans to expand our forces." Jiang Chen used the excuse of maintaining area stability and rejected Valery's suggestion.

Of course, Jiang Chen wouldn't explain the real reason. It was because Russia's new S-500 wouldn't please him - he could easily bring compact anti-air weapons from the apocalypse.

But Valery seemed to have accepted his reason. He shrugged and didn't push any further.

The vessel handover agreement soon reached its conclusion.

Based on typical procedures, the Russian representatives would leave first. The Russian General and Valery shook hands with the Vice President of Xin and Jiang Chen.

"In my opinion, you are shrewder than most dictators in the world." Standing at the military harbor on New Moon Island, Valery told Jiang Chen before he boarded the boat back to Coro Island.

"Oh? Why do you say that?"

Valery nonchalantly looked at the Vice President chatting with the General. "Most dictators are eager to display the supremacy of their power and are eager to let the world know their dangerousness. But you're different - what you did was ingenious. Xin possesses the most democratic policy in the world, whether it's the elections or freedom of speech, but the economy and national

defense are all under your control. Xin would never introduce an anti-monopoly law, so your actions will always be legal."

"Thanks for the compliment. But may I ask? Is this Russia's view or Mr. Valery's personal opinion?"

When Valery heard this, he laughed audaciously.

"Please don't think too much - of course this is my personal opinion. But could Mr. Jiang Chen answer a question of mine? Personal question."

"Of course."

"You're already really rich - rich enough to buy a country. Based on my years of work experience, a dictatorship and a monopoly are usually 'lazy' because they don't compete and maintaining the status quo would be the ideal state. But with traits fitting both titles, you are doing the complete opposite. Even now, Future Group is continuously expanding into new markets while Celestial Trade is continuously upgrading its arms. I am personally curious... What are your aspirations?" Valery asked.

"Mr. Valery, your question is quite odd. Microsoft has a lot of money, and by some definitions, they have achieved a 'standard' monopoly, but they never stopped expanding their market. Future Group is an enterprise, so we must continuously ensure we remain competitive. Also, I have to correct your perspective: a lazy dictator is just a shortsighted dictator."

"Then as a dictator with foresight, you still haven't answered my question. What are your aspirations?" Valery joked.

"Aspirations?" Jiang Chen laughed.

"This is only a personal question. If it's inappropriate, please forget it." Seeing as Jiang Chen didn't answer, Valery courteously offered him an out.

"It's not inappropriate. Before, it was purely about making money, but now..." Jiang Chen paused. "I want to see further

places."

Just like Valery said, Jiang Chen already amassed wealth he never imagined one and half years ago.

In the next ten years, even if Future Group didn't introduce any more innovative technology, just with virtual reality alone, it stood at a height insurmountable by any other enterprises in the world. Even if scientific research on multi-polarized worlds was faster than research on three-polarized worlds, the world here couldn't make immersive virtual reality technology into a reality.

If it wasn't for the ship sent by Harmony named Evolution that was en route to Earth...

When Jiang Chen saw the Russian representatives off, he found Ivan and ordered him to move the frigates and submarines to the harbor on Coconut Island. The construction robots would complete modernization improvements to the weapons onboard.

Chapter 537: Fight Jets in Service

Time quickly flew by in December. Pannu Islands felt like summer all year long since it didn't have the slightest bit of winter weather, but Wanghai City in the wasteland was already covered by pristine snow. Compared to previous years, Wanghai no longer felt like an apocalypse anymore.

These days, Jiang Chen occasionally returned to the wasteland since he had too many people he couldn't let go. But because the situation had already stabilized, he didn't stay as long as before.

He would have dinner with the girls, "communicate his affection" with Sun Jiao, eat the sisters together, shower with Yao Yao, and bully Lin Lin. If he just stayed in the mansion, it didn't feel like they were in an apocalypse at all.

The entire area on the east side of Huangpu River was covered with NAC-established inspection stations. If one looked up, it was possible to see Type-51 helicopters patrolling the city or Aurora-20 soaring by. NAC had established absolute control in Wanghai.

NAC's diplomats were currently in negotiations with Liuding about including the east bank into the "protective territory."

Bohai "Angry Tide" ship-borne electromagnetic pulse cannon could fire from the Yangtze River estuary to Luzhou. Not only did it possess a fearful 450 km range, but it could also launch 10-400 kg bombs. The cannon was a superior source of firepower support among the ship-borne based weapons. Whether it was Bohai or cannon technology, Jiang Chen was determined to take possession.

If they could solve the problem through negotiations, then that would be ideal. If they couldn't solve the problem through negotiations, they would have to resort to military power.

This was the standard in the wasteland.

On the other hand, the radioactive material cleanup and crater

filling had been completed. Although the Gamma value remained elevated, there was no need for personnel entering the area to wear nuclear protective suits. The iodine stored in their EPs and anti-radioactive medicine were more than enough to enable traversing in the city center.

Because of snow and freezing conditions, the Project Garden of Eden beside Dianshan Lake was temporarily stopped.

Jia City occasional encountered mutants migrating east, but with the First Division led by Cheng Weiguo stationed there as well as inspection stations along the way, Jiang Chen wasn't worried that the mutants would sneak into the city to build nests.

The winter was peaceful.

Because of NAC's presence, there were no more incidents in Wanghai.

On the contrary, in the modern world, the global situation began to escalate.

In South Asia, following the independence of Moro, the movement began to escalate on war-embroiled MLL Island with signs of spreading to Masa Island. At the end of November, the guerrilla forces launched a massive military attack on the city of Dawo and successfully disintegrated a light infantry division and a light armored brigade stationed locally. The Moro leader, Santos, used social media sites to announce the civil war had officially entered the second phase; the city of Dawo would become Moro's capital.

Jiang Chen initially funded Santos with the sole intention of causing trouble for country F, but this guy managed to launch a successful independence movement and even managed to establish his own capital.

The reason they could achieve this success was partially because of the low combat abilities of F soldiers as demonstrated by the

hostage rescue incident. It was also partially due to UA elections and the inability of their biggest ally to intervene in the civil war. UA only ceremonially conducted some diplomatic work and sold firearms at a lower cost.

With Moro's independence now a possibility, Jiang Chen changed his initial plans. When they finished that batch of firearms, he would continue to provide support.

Of course, this support wasn't without a cost; it would be exchanged for ownership rights of the mines in the guerrilla-controlled area or actual ores. Because of this, Jiang Chen ordered Barkary to register a shell company in Australia with the sole purpose of facilitating transactions between the ores and firearms. The ores of unknown origin were then transported to the factories in New Guinea to be further processed; a portion would be sold to international markets while the other portion would be "sold" to Celestial Trade.

The flipping ore trick was the same as Turkey selling the IS crude oil, but Jiang Chen's method left no trace at all. With the support of the radar station located on New Moon Island, the transport vessel containing the ores seemed to have eyes and avoided all the patrol boats and vessels that blocked MLL Island. Regardless of how frustrated country F was, the supply shipments to the guerrillas were never tracked down.

What was worth mentioning was that the company providing firearms to the shell company was a UA firearms company. To avoid the transaction from being tracked by the FBA, all orders were conducted with gold.

Then there was Europe.

The refugee problem continued to heat up, forcing all of Europe to a crossroads. Regarding whether a full ban of refugees into Europe should be enacted, the EU countries had divergent opinions. Some of these opinions included Fran, Frankberg, and

Bel which suffered the pain of terrorist attacks and Britain which threatened to leave EU as well as Gree which played the card "If you don't buy my bonds, I'll open my door to refugees"...

It was hard to say whether it was distrust that caused the differences, or that the differences caused distrust. With the meddling of an invisible hand, visible cracks appeared in the previously united EU.

Negotiations between countries didn't result in anything material, but each country started a domestic wave of protests. A lot of extremists finally lost their rationality; people with nefarious intentions aggravated them to start attacking innocent refugees. They swore to seek revenge, to respond to terrorism with cruelty.

In a chaotic state, Frankberg's New Choice Party began its discreet rise to power, but the support of the CDU in power continued to plummet. The extreme right-wing party gained footing in Frankberg politics which made the situation even worse...

"War is never a good thing, but weapons are a great thing. Ivan, do you know what I mean?"

Standing at the fighter hanger on New Moon Island, Jiang Chen had his eyes narrowed and watched the Aurora-20 that just parked. He was speaking nonchalantly to Ivan beside him.

"Sorry, I don't really understand." The veteran shook his head honestly.

"It is only when both sides think the opponent's weapon is strong enough to finish them that both sides will agree to sit down and talk."

Ivan grinned. He had a personal experience mirroring Jiang Chen's words when he was a soldier in the Soviet era. But he still didn't understand why his boss suddenly mentioned these things.

But Jiang Chen didn't speak about this further. Instead, he

looked at the pilot familiarizing himself with the equipment inside the cockpit.

The first Aurora-20 fighter jet had officially entered service, filling a gap in Celestial Trade's air force. Since it was the most advanced technology from the apocalypse, its strength was king among the fifth-generation fighter jets.

The initial flight of Aurora-20 was conducted by the pilot with the highest score on the training modules. The control equipment of Aurora-20 had a high degree of intelligence to it - takeoff, landing, cruise, and even air-to-ground attacks could be done by the program.

Just from this perspective alone, the semi-intelligent control mode allowed it to be classified among the ranks of quasi-sixth generation fighters.

And because of this reason, one and half month's of training was enough for pilots to maneuver the aircraft. Watching the aircraft engine igniting, completing a vertical takeoff and landing and runaway takeoff and landing, cruising around the border in addition to other missions, Jiang Chen personally awarded the pilot a medal. After the first flight ceremony, Jiang Chen toured the air force base and showed his face to the young men swearing allegiance to him then he returned to Coro Island.

There was a product launch conference waiting for him in the afternoon.

Before the start of the conference that was destined to make history, he needed some preparation.

Chapter 538: A Unique Product Lanuch Conference

At twelve midnight, Los Santos, located in South Cal, was covered by the veil of the night. At this time, most of the people in Los Santos had already fallen asleep, but the Future Group UA headquarters was still lit as bright as day.

Inside the circular conference room on the first floor, the room was crowded with people. The reporters inside the venue had set up cameras while waiting for Jiang Chen to appear. The employees were busily running between places to setup sophisticated-looking equipment.

Danny gave his assistant a few key notes in recording then he took out a notebook reviewing the questions he prepared. There were a lot of reporters from Los Santos Times as everyone wanted this reporting opportunity; it wasn't easy for him to obtain this opportunity. Considering how addicted people were to the Phantom helmet, the attention this conference would get wouldn't be insignificant.

"Do you think he'll come?" Maybe he was confident with his questions as the reporter sitting beside Danny stuffed his tablet into his bag as he asked Danny casually.

Danny noticed that the logo beside his microphone belonged to the South Cal Journal. His nametag in front of his chest stated that he was: Charles John

"Probably. The media here are all top notch in the UA. Even Microsoft doesn't have the gall to just leave the media hanging," Danny joked.

Charles laughed and lowered his voice.

"I have an interesting piece of information."

"Oh?" Danny adjusted his posture and moved closer.

There was still some time before the conference officially started. It would be beneficial for his news report if he could gather some information previously unknown to him. The information could be used as a source regardless if it was fake or real.

"Yesterday afternoon, I asked a contact of mine to search through the arrival list for all the airports in Los Santos, but I didn't see his name among them at all."

"Maybe they took a private jet," Danny said jokingly, but he mocked this reporter in his mind.

[What kind of information is this? If he really wanted to keep a low profile, there's no way he would let you find him.]

At the same time, the lights inside the venue suddenly shut off. Everyone stopped chatting amongst themselves while they trained their complete attention to the front.

[He's here!]

Danny put his notebook away, took a deep breath, and adjusted his tie. But when he saw his peer from South Cal Journals, he almost burst out laughing. Although Charles was sitting, his feet were in a position ready to run.

[So fu*king shameless.]

Danny cursed in his mind, but he clenched his microphone tightly and prepared to swarm the person at the front.

Future Technology didn't make the reporters wait for long. The General Manager of UA behind the scenes looked at his watch, nodded to his employees, and signaled them to turn on the equipment.

A beam of light shone on stage. Using the guidance of the light, a young Han man in a suit walked to the front of the stage.

Just as expected, thunderous applause erupted beneath the stage. Although the UA media present maintained a reserved attitude

toward the Hua-based Future Technology, their technology still gained everyone's respect. So the reporters weren't stingy with their applause at Jiang Chen's entrance.

The screen in the back lit up as English letters surfaced on the screen. The reporters present weren't unfamiliar with Future Technology's real-time translation technology.

"I'm grateful that everyone could attend our company's product launch conference. I also have to apologize to our friends from North America who must work overtime and our reporters in West Europe who must wake up early."

When Jiang Chen said this, Danny, sitting at the front, smiled understandingly but soon, he was stunned along with the other reporters below the stage.

The introduction gave a lot of information to process.

Jiang Chen scanned the reporters below the stage. He smiled and continued with his hands open.

"That's right - this conference is being hosted simultaneously at the 12 region headquarters of Future Group."

Jiang Chen's words were like a bomb thrown into the previously silent venue. All the reporters' eyes widened and looked at him with disbelief.

Product launch conference being hosted simultaneously at all 12 regional headquarters? What's going on?!

Although it wasn't the Q&A period, a number of reporters raised their hands including Danny; they needed an explanation from Future Technology.

It looked like Jiang Chen expected this situation as he acted rather calmly. He turned around to scan the reporters at the venue and his sight stopped on Danny in the front seat.

"Reporter 304, please ask your question."

Ecstatic that Jiang Chen called him, Danny immediately stood up and extended the microphone in his hand.

"You said your company is hosting product launch conferences simultaneously around the world. Does this mean that all other conferences are hosted by regional general managers? Why did you choose North America as the conference you attended personally?"

Precisely speaking, it was two questions meshed together.

Jiang Chen smiled.

"I can hear the misunderstanding from your question. Let me first clarify - even if the conference is being held simultaneously at twelve different locations around the world, I can still personally attend all of them."

Danny looked at Jiang Chen dumbfounded; he didn't know what he meant. But since his question time was over, he had to sit down.

After answering the question from the Los Santos Times, Jiang Chen didn't call any other reporters because he knew what they wanted to ask. And what they wanted to ask was what he would now explain.

"I know everyone here isn't a stranger to a certain word. That's right - I'm talking about holograms. And it's my hologram standing here. Because of this, I must emphasize the importance of the order of questions.

When they heard what Jiang Chen said, there were whispers below the stage as all the reporters looked at Jiang Chen on the stage in astonishment. The reporters obviously couldn't tell it was a hologram. Before Jiang Chen revealed the truth, not a single person knew it.

"But... this is too realistic."

Charles stared at Jiang Chen while murmuring.

But Danny's reaction was more dramatic compared to Charles.

He often visited Silicon Valley and was aware of the technology on the frontier. Hologram technology was extremely advanced and it wasn't difficult to have an ultra-realistic hologram.

But all holograms had to be set in advance. Holographic projection technology was applied to the field of instant messaging, and collecting images to form three-dimensional images wasn't something that NASDAQ companies highly skilled in "blowing bubbles" could arrogantly claim to be able to do.

Yet Future Technology put this technology on the table without a huge commotion.

God, is this just the launch conference of the Phantom Helmet?

A crazy idea emerged in Danny's head. He stared at his notebook full of notes and felt speechless. Future Technology's unconventional move completely disrupted his train of thought.

[Once the Q&A starts, what am I going to ask?]

Danny's problem was the same for all the reporters present. Jiang Chen stared at the expressions of the reporters below the stage as a smile surfaced on his face.

This was the impression he wanted to leave.

The product launch conference was intended to launch the MMORPG , but the product "Phantom Helmet! The virtual reality technology! MMORPG" was the tip of the iceberg for virtual reality technology. If he wanted to make users around the world depend on the product launched by Future Technology, he had to make them astonished and fanatical.

Jiang Chen spoke again.

"Also worth mentioning is that I'm currently in Xin and conducting the conference through the Phantom Helmet."

Chapter 539: The Door and the Key

Jiang Chen's sentence immediately dragged the off-topic-conference back on topic and at the same time, he advertised the Phantom helmet without a trace.

The media below the stage was in astonishment once again.

He was attending the news conference in real time through the virtual reality helmet.

A word abruptly popped up in Danny's head.

[AR?]

AR stood for Augmented Reality. It was the use of virtual objects to "enhance reality." Compared with virtual reality (VR), it had the advantages of a stronger sense of reality and small modeling workload. One representative product was Microsoft's HoloLens. After wearing their glasses, you could change your home table into a gaming table and transform the wall into a TV screen.

But for the people in a socially interactive environment, the weaknesses of AR technology were obvious. When you wore the reality enhancement glasses and waved your arm to make some weird maneuver in the air, what would your roommate think?

Regardless, it would be awkward as hell.

It was one of the challenging aspects of AR application - only people wearing the glasses could see "enhanced" virtual objects. But Future Technology used holograms to fuse virtual reality and actual reality together perfectly, which was why all the reporters were stunned.

"The Phantom Helmet." Jiang Chen opened one hand while he faced the silent reporters and smiled. "The key to the virtual world."

Particles fused into lines above his palm and weaved themselves

into a realistic helmet. The helmet hovered above his palm and slowly rotated in the eyes of the reporters.

"I know everyone here has an understanding about the functionality of the helmet, so I won't describe the specifications here. I'll only provide two numbers: 1.44 million and 0."

When Jiang Chen mentioned the number 1.44 million, a lot of reporters realized it was the total number of helmets available in the virtual reality experience project previously announced.

But what did 0 mean?

All the reporters had the same question in mind, but Jiang Chen, who saw through this, answered their question with his next words.

"1.44 million Phantom Helmets. 37% of the units operated nonstop 24 hours for the past three months, but not a single unit malfunctioned."

All the reporters in the twelve conferences around the world were visibly stunned.

"How is that possible?"

"Without malfunction... This ratio is too absurd."

"Who can prove this? There should be a limit in bluffing; do you think all consumers around the world are fools?" At one conference, a short reporter stood up and questioned Jiang Chen's claim.

"Of course I can prove this, Mister. As for the evidence, if you exit, turn right, and walk three hundred meters, there will be a net cafe which is part of Future Technology's virtual reality experience project. Why don't you see for yourself if I'm bluffing? Also, I noticed that you didn't raise your hand when you spoke, and you signed a guarantee regarding respecting the rules of the conference. I must question your ability to adhere to these rules."

The reporter who asked the question listened to the surrounding partially-compassionate, partially-mocking whispers and sat down with his face looking pale.

He didn't think Jiang Chen, simultaneously facing all twelve conferences, would notice his comment.

With Jiang Chen's words of criticism directed to all conferences around the globe, he lost face for his publisher to the media around the world, and that officially marked the end of his professional career.

"Now, let us continue on the question regarding the Phantom Helmet. Just like everyone has witnessed, our helmet has a long standby time and exceptional quality. Even running continuously for three months, it does not experience frame lag or crashes caused by aging circuits or overheating damage."

"And the Phantom Helmet is able to do this because of our unique sealing technology, so our helmet cannot be disassembled and we do not accept any demolition behavior. Any malfunctions due to the disassembly of the helmet by the user will be the responsibility of the user. For any failure due to normal use, we will provide free replacements and half-price redemption services."

Jiang Chen purposely downplayed the role of the graphene chip, but his explanation didn't satisfy all the media as quite a number of them raised their hands, hoping Jiang Chen would give them an opportunity to ask a question.

Standing on the stage in virtual reality, Jiang Chen estimated the number of hands raised between the twelve conferences. He coughed then spoke.

"Based on the number of questions, a lot of reporters obviously still have questions regarding my explanation. My presentation has come to an end, so just like before, for the rest of the time, you can ask and I will answer."

When Jiang Chen's words died, all the reporters present raised their hands. Even then, it was in an orderly fashion. With the disgraced reporter set as an example, no reporter stood up without being called or disrupted the conference.

When Charles heard Jiang Chen calling his number, he immediately stood up to ask his question.

"The sealing mechanism your company utilizes is understandable, but isn't it excessive to demolish the circuit upon opening the helmet? After all, the user should have the right to determine the use of the product after purchasing it. The confidentiality of the technology could be protected by patent law without sacrificing the user's interests."

When Danny heard this tricky question, Danny couldn't help but nod in agreement. The South Cal Journals reporter, although he had a silly appearance, sharply pointed to a weakness of Future Technology. Sacrifice the legitimate rights and interests of consumers? In a country "keen on the rights" of consumers, it would be hard for Future Technology to address this problem.

"Allow me to make a correction about the misunderstanding of Future Technology." Jiang Chen was prepared for the question as he smiled at the media. "First, we never established any sealing mechanism that harmed user's rights."

Regarding Jiang Chen's answer, a lot of reporters who wanted to ask the same question were all dumbfounded.

[What kind of answer is that? It's like forcefully insisting that black is white?]i

"You can't ignore the fact that you are infringing on user rights just because you sign a warranty agreement with the user at the time of purchase," Charles argued.

"Please be cautious with your words, Mr. Charles. Future Technology has only undergone presales on its official site with the

opportunity to request a refund at any time to open up the spot. All the Phantom Helmets on the market are only available in virtual reality experience stores, and those helmets were never sold. Strictly speaking, they are part of Future Technology's assets."

"I'm not going to pursue personal or collective legal responsibility for those who open the property without authorization of the company, but instead, I will fine double the price of the helmet upon discovery of the opening of the helmet. Until three days after the consumer receives a helmet from the courier, we will be the ones infringed upon, do you understand?" Jiang Chen looked at Charles in the eye and smiled.

They weren't going to pursue legal responsibility because it would be impossible to do so. Some of the unauthorized openings of the helmets were personal actions, but some were with the permission of the government. It was as difficult to pursue legal responsibility as suing Future Group for the monopoly in Xin.

Charles' throat bobbed as he felt helpless. Although he thought Jiang Chen's words had a flaw somehow, he didn't know what the problem was.

Danny, who was standing beside him, was discreetly shocked. Jiang Chen managed to use one sentence to change Future Group's position from the infringer to the infringed party.

"What I'm going to say next is an explanation to the consumers interested in purchasing the Phantom Helmet." Jiang Chen paused. "Just as we said, we never established a sealing mechanism. Opening the helmet, causing the circuit to overload, is purely because of a circuit protection mechanism installed in the helmet. Any demolition behavior will cause the circuit to overload and damage the circuit board inside the helmet. I admit this is a flaw of Future Technology. We will make improvements on this point and hope consumers will understand."

Equating the sealing mechanism to a deficiency in their

technology was as shameless as they could get. A lot of people watching the live conference on Future Technology's official site were calling them shameless.

But they couldn't rebut his explanation. Since Future Technology was the only company who could manufacture immersive virtual reality equipment, only they had the final interpretation of the technology.

[If I can't do it, you can't forcefully make me do it.]

The reporters who planned on pursuing a line of questioning regarding the excessiveness of the sealing mechanism all gave up on the idea. Since Future Technology already provided an explanation, persisting on this problem would only waste opportunities for valuable questions without gaining any useful information.

When Charles sat down, another reporter who was picked stood up. Judging by the microphone in her hand, she was a reporter from the Wall Street Journal, and her question would focus on the financial aspect rather than the technical side without a doubt.

"Mr. Jiang Chen, since your company already achieved an absolute leading position in the field of virtual reality, will you use your technical advantage to prevent other companies from entering the field?"

It was a sensitive topic because it involved a secret that had to do with all major corporations.

Monopoly.

"Of course not - we're happy to welcome other companies to develop virtual reality along with us. Just like what you've seen, the Phantom Helmet's functionality isn't only games - games are only one of the methods that allow us to push the helmet to the world. The reason why I could simultaneously attend all twelve conferences around the world was because of the functionalities of

the Phantom Helmet."

When Jiang Chen said this, all the reporters' eyes lit up. Future Technology planned to cooperate with other enterprises in virtual reality! This was an incredible piece of news.

Because of this sentence, all the resulting questions revolved around Future Technology's potential cooperation.

In what form will the cooperation take place? Will Future Technology make its technology public? To these questions, Jiang Chen answered them one by one.

"Immersive virtual reality technology is the core technology of Future Technology and the technology won't be made public. Future Technology currently has no plans to register for patents in the short term, but Future Technology welcomes cooperation in content generation."

"Our cooperation will include all fields of the internet. After a period of time, Future Technology will gradually open to its partner's related technology in program development in virtual reality to allow tech companies to develop software compatible to the Phantom Helmet."

Virtual reality was a massive market. All the functionalities possessed by the present day internet could theoretically be achieved through a platform on virtual reality. A single company's power alone could not digest the entire market and could potentially lead to anti-monopoly allegations to prevent other companies from entering the market.

Future Technology only needed to control the "key" to the market with the quantum computer acting as the "door" as well as quantum communication satellites, that would launch at a later date, acting as the connection node to the virtual reality web.

And the world behind the door should be developed by all companies around the world.

The product launch conference not only introduced the Phantom as the key to the virtual world - it also sent out a positive signal to the entire world.

A signal called cooperation.

Chapter 540: Media's Reaction

In contrast to the Los Santos conference on the other side of the world, the conference taking place in the afternoon in Hua had people watching the live stream on the official site. Due to the high volume of traffic, Xia Shiyu had to contact their service provider to immediately put the newly purchased servers online and she rented ten additional servers to manage the simultaneous streaming that broke the one hundred million mark.

Once the conference ended, the comments section of the video exploded.

<I don't care about anything else. Can the official tell us when the helmet is going to come online? Where do I purchase it?>

<Does OP not know how to read? The announcement on the official site clearly said the helmet will be available to purchase in three days with only the online portal available for the time being.>

<I'm so proud of Future Technology for demonstrating the prowess of Hua.>

<Future Technology's President immigrated and Future Group is registered in Xin; your pride is absurd.>

<So what? Baidu's presidents, the richest man in Hua - every single rich person wants to get out. At least he earned his money from clean sources and used actual technology. Regardless, Future originated from Hua, its root is in Hua, so that's enough!>

<I'm so done. You guys can make anything related to politics.>

<One word: buy, buy, buy!>

...

The heated debate continued on the internet, and the media's opinions were released soon after the conclusion of the conference.

As the renowned news reporter of the <Los Santos Times>, when Danny walked out of the conference, he expressed his incredulity on Twitter.

"It was the first time seeing a conference as extraordinary as this. It only lasted two hours, but I spent one hour feeling astonished. You won't understand the shock I felt without being there in person."

The tweet was retweeted thousands of times in one day and even Danny himself was stunned by the reaction. The reason was because it was purely his opinion as well as the opinion carried by all other reporters.

With a similar reaction on the internet, the product launch caused a massive earthquake in the media and the financial world. 2016 was the year virtual reality was born, and the Phantom Helmet introduced at the end of the year added a colorful mark to the exciting year.

More critically, it was about the signal Future Technology sent out!

They planned to cooperate with other companies in the field of virtual reality!

"Currently, there are no visible benefits to releasing this news, but at least it saved some of the VR companies' stocks. When the Phantom Helmet was released, their stocks plummeted.

In the video conference, Xia Shiyu pushed up her glasses, and the curvature of her mouth raised up, perfectly illustrating the pride on her mind.

Jiang Chen hadn't seen her for a long time and she seemed more and more attractive. Her luscious black hair was curled behind her head to form a circle. Regarding the rectangular glasses on her delicate nose, if any other women dressed this way, they would've been ridiculed as old-fashioned and boring. But because it was Xia

Xia Shiyu, this not-so-fashion-forward appearance cast a lively and elegant vibe.

Sometimes even Jiang Chen wondered: [What if she smiled more...?]

"Ahem, President?"

"Ah, nothing. Ahem, please continue." Jiang Chen awkwardly adjusted his positioning as he accidentally let his mind slip.

Xia Shiyu looked at Jiang Chen with blame. She combed her hair over her ear habitually then she continued.

"Because of the news yesterday, a total of six VR companies as well as 13 tech companies submitted their letter of intent for cooperation in the Hua area."

"Only this many?" Jiang Chen was surprised.

"It's already quite a few. We just concluded our product launch conference and our helmets are still sitting in the warehouse. Even if other companies want to cooperate with us, they must consider their own business and market size. Speaking of cooperation, do you still remember Zhongxin High Tech?"

That name sounded familiar, but Jiang Chen didn't manage to recall this company in his head.

Xia Shiyu sensed his confusion and reminded him.

"Last year, that military project."

"Oh! The... Zhou family's industry." Jiang Chen immediately realized and paused. "What did they say?"

Because of that project, he, unfortunately, gained the interest of CIB. He burned his bridge with the General Staff Department "without considering the bigger picture," took out the people from the CIB then escaped to Xiangjiang. Because of that attack, it made him certain about the decision to establish his own area of control.

Although only a year had passed, since so many things happened

in the past year, he almost forgot about the forces in the country.

Precisely speaking, the Zhou family was his "business partner."

"Based on what they said, when the conference was streaming yesterday, they used our official site to follow the progress of the conference. They're interested in developing applications for virtual reality that we mentioned and immediately called for a board meeting after the end of the conference. They even sent out business representatives to Xiangjiang this morning and advised us of the potential for cooperation." Xia Shiyu pushed up her glasses.

"Did they mention which area?" Jiang Chen asked.

"In the military field. They asked about the possibility of using immersive virtual reality training to replace live ammunition training."

"The possibility certainly exists, but it will be hard to implement." Jiang Chen sunk into his chair. "And it's impossible to replace it. The coordination and reaction of the body can only be trained by actual exercise."

Unless training chambers with nutrients were used.

On the other hand, Jiang Chen didn't want to step into the field of military tech. It had to do with confidentiality.

Would a country allow their training modules to be run on foreign servers? Absolutely not! They had to protect their weapon specifications, which were confidential.

And Jiang Chen wouldn't hand over his quantum computer; he wasn't that selfless.

"I didn't give them a precise response," Xia Shiyu said.

"It's fine even if you reject them because I personally don't have any interest in becoming an arms dealer."

As if she predicted Jiang Chen would say this, Xia Shiyu sighed.

"The domestic market is still massive, and virtual reality is a big

piece of the pie, so there are a lot of people eager to get their hands on it. Take regulation for example - what should be regulated, who should be regulated, and how should it be regulated all haven't been addressed yet. Do you know what I mean?"

"Of course I do. Because it hasn't been addressed, it depends completely on what we have to say before it's adjusted." Jiang Chen laughed nonchalantly.

In better terms, it was crossing the river while searching for rocks.

"As long as you understand, we can't make the same mistake as Google," Xia Shiyu reminded him discreetly.

"Don't worry, we won't replicate Google's failure because we don't have a copy-cat that could become our Baidu."

Once the Phantom completely conquered the high ground of the market, the quantum computer at Coro Island would act as the server and the global virtual reality network would be established. By that time, even if virtual reality technology was made public, no one would be able to hinder Future Technology's control on the market.

Just like now, no country could get rid of the internet.

Chapter 541: Keep an eye on them

After ending the call with Xia Shiyu, Jiang Chen closed his laptop, leaned back into the chair and began to think with his eyes closed.

Based on the news from Zhang Yapin, through arrangements with Han, the time of the visit was set for December 21st. During this visit, he will represent Xin businessmen as the President of Future Group to explore business partnership opportunities with Han enterprises...

At least on the surface.

Just like Xia Shiyu said, the country has an unclear attitude toward Future Group. Jiang Chen tricked Linhua Group terribly in the Xin tourism development project, he would never believe that the Wang family would forget the past and settle with him.

Not only the Wang family, the VR industry chain affected multiple fields. There were certainly a group of people that held a hostile opinion toward Future Group who came in as a powerful outsider.

Future Technology needed an ally, an ally with a strong enough voice.

That was the top mission for this visit.

As to the candidate, Jiang Chen had someone in mind. Zhou family was not bad a choice with reasons baring none other than that their family assets were mostly in the military tech field, therefore lacked the possibility of competition with Future Technology. And also their stance toward Future Technology last year caused divergence with the Wang family and a strain in their relationship.

Of course, the most critical part was that they had a powerful voice in Han.

The problematic part was that they became interested in the application of virtual reality technology in the field of military tech. While Jiang Chen didn't mind helping Han in this field, he didn't have the intention to give grounds in core virtual reality technology.

Just as Jiang Chen was debating how to reach a partnership with the force in Han, Ayesha quietly walked beside him with a plate containing golden fried rice and some milk and placed it on his table.

"Mhmm? Is it done already? You don't have to bring it up, you could have just called me down." Jiang Chen smiled at the considerate girl.

"You looked busy so I brought it up. Are you done now?" Ayesha asked lightly.

"Mhmm. I just asked about the current work situation in Han. There was nothing important, so it didn't take long." Jiang Chen smelled the aroma of the fried rice as he just wanted to devour them.

A beautiful curvature appeared on Ayesha's mouth when she saw Jiang Chen's expression, "A new recipe I learned from Aunty Li."

Since the two elders moved to Xin, they began to enjoy their quiet and peaceful life. When Jiang Chen was not busy, he would go visit his parents and have dinner. However, most of the time Ayesha was the person that accompanied them. The cute Ayesha was particularly adored by Mommy Jiang.

"Is it?" Jiang Chen rubbed her head, "Thank you for spending time with them for me."

Ayesha timidly lowered her head as she sensed the warmth from the hand on her head.

There was no plan this morning. After breakfast, Jiang Chen went to the backyard of the mansion. Other than plants tended by

drones and a swimming pool, there was also a new shooting range.

Without wearing any protective gear, Jiang Chen casually took out a pistol from his storage dimension, aimed at the target 50 meters out and pressed the trigger.

Bang!

Three consecutive shots left three bean-sized holes on the wooden target. One ten ring and two eight rings, Jiang Chen was pleased with the result. He hasn't practiced for a long time and felt unfamiliar with shooting.

If it were before, there should be no problem getting two ten rings.

He remembered in the beginning when Sun Jiao taught him how to shoot as a reminiscent smile appeared on his face. Only two years passed, but it felt like a long time has passed.

Just then, Jiang Chen's ears moved, and suddenly he raised his pistol while slowly moving to the entrance of the shooting range.

Faint ripples appeared in thin air as the blonde Ghost Agent with hands raised walked in front of Jiang Chen.

"Sorry, I was just curious..." Penny scratched her head and said in embarrassment.

Only the most loyal warriors could obtain a stealth suit, and Jiang Chen didn't suspect their loyalty. She was really just curious. Curious if Jiang Chen could really detect their presence without checking the EP map.

"Curiosity kills the cat." Jiang Chen didn't get angry because of her intrusion; instead, he jokingly left this sentence and put away his weapon.

Seeing Jiang Chen was not angry, Penny didn't say more and awkwardly looked away.

"What about the mission I gave you?" He didn't persist further on

this question as he reloaded the pistol and asked nonchalantly.

When Jiang Chen asked about the mission, Penny put on a stern face.

"It has been completed."

Then, she took out the tablet computer from a tactical backpack. Her finger continuously pressed a few times on the screen before handing it to Jiang Chen.

Penny was the Ghost Agent sent to Norway to track the spy from Leilian Company. After she finished her work, Jiang Chen didn't call her back immediately, instead sent her to Frankberg to investigate the relationship between Willie Society and the Rothschild.

The progress of the investigation was not smooth as there was no evidence that directly suggests a connection between the two. It was not until some time ago did she finally make some progress.

"This picture is?" Jiang Chen took over the tablet and looked at the Slavic on the screen as he felt the face looked familiar.

Then, he suddenly recalled that he saw this person at Carmen's manor. It was the last day of the Frankberg trip, he and Ayesha were walking to the garage when they saw Carmen talking with a Slavic.

"Corso, originally a guerrilla of the Balkans, became active as an arms dealer in the Mediterranean after the end of the civil war and is now active in the Ukrainian area. He provides weapons and equipment to government forces under the authorization of NATO."

"He is related to the terrorist attack in Ber?"

"There is no direct evidence suggesting he is related to the attack, but without a doubt, he has a close relationship with the Rothschild family. Also, when I followed him to Ukraine, I discovered he was in contact with Willie Society."

The three points connected into a line and the conclusion was certain. Just like what he had suspected, the Rothschild was connected with Willie Society!

The Ghost Agent looked at Jiang Chen in deep thought and waited for his order.

"Return to Frankberg, I need you to continue keeping an eye on the Rothschild and Willie Society."

Although he knew curiosity kills the cat, to the ambition displayed by the Rothschild family, Jiang Chen felt concerned.

"Yes."

The Ghost Agent nodded and hid herself away.

Jiang Chen couldn't help but laugh at Penny's deceptive exit. He then reloaded the pistol and aimed at the target again.

But then, his phone began to ring.

He took out the phone and looked at the number on the screen as a genuinely shocked expression appeared.

[They are here already?]

Chapter 542: Rocket Launch

At the airport of Coro Island, a slim and tall man in a grey suit stood outside of the airport with a briefcase in his right hand, while his left hand continuously checked his watch. Although his family was not originally from Frankberg, as someone who was born and raised in Mun, he had the habit of the Frankberg people.

Such as, repetitively checking the time and a passion for BBQ.

An adorable little girl around the age of six was with him. She had a blonde ponytail and looked sweet.

A black Benz stopped at the curb of the road.

Jiang Chen got off the car, Amos' eyes lit up, immediately held his daughter's hand, and walked up with his briefcase in hand.

"Hello, nice to meet you, Doctor Amos." Jiang Chen shook hands with him and then looked at the girl that seemed to be afraid of strangers with a smile. "This is?"

"My daughter, Millian." Amos smiled and looked at his daughter. "Greet Uncle."

The little girl hid behind her father pouted her mouth when she heard her dad's request and spoke with nonstandard Han.

"Hello, Uncle."

Although it was cute, Jiang Chen felt an odd sorrow when the little loli called him uncle.

On the car, Jiang Chen learned that he divorced a long time ago and his daughter was his only family.

"What's the situation like in Ber?"

"Extremely unsafe..." Amos sighed, "Protests are going on every day. Some people wanted Merk to step down. Some people called the protestors to remain rational. Just a few days ago, a young man threw a Motkov Cocktail inside the refugee camp causing a

pregnant woman to die and her husband to suffer severe burns. The furious refugees grabbed anything they could get their hands on and rushed into the street... Of course, the parliament already ordered for the refugee camps to be closed and did some preventative measures to control the situation. Perhaps things will get better in a few months... But I don't want to wait any longer."

At the end of that gala, Jiang Chen left his business card with him. But what he didn't think was that the professor from the University of Ber made his choice already, handed in his letter of resignation, and headed to Xin to join Future Technology.

Because Jiang Chen was surprised, he personally drove to the airport to pick him up.

Amos Kimberley was indeed an outstanding talent. At the age of 42, he obtained double doctorate degrees in information technology and mechanical engineering and became the youngest engineering professor at the University of Ber.

Not only that, he had quite a list of achievements in the field of robots and artificial intelligence. The number of published papers on [SCI](#) may be less than some of the people, but every single paper he published regarding robots and artificial intelligence had been referenced by more than 10 SCI papers.

The reason why he brought his family to Xin was partially due to the security in Ber continuing to deteriorate while he saw the possibility of challenging himself at Future Technology.

Of course, the salary offered by Jiang Chen was another reason why he decided to immigrate. The pay the University offered him was 100 thousand Euros, taxed at 25-30%. The benefits Frankberg offered were quite good, but because of the refugee problem, the benefits system was unable to withstand the load of the society and continued to worsen. Jiang Chen however, directly offered him a base salary of 200 thousand USD after tax while providing him with housing and a car; these were tangible benefits.

Globally, these benefits were among the top, but what really motivated him to bring his family here was not because of the benefits, but because of the speech on artificial intelligence.

Jiang Chen previously told him it was a corporate secret.

Therefore, if he became part of the company, he could access this knowledge.

With that idea in mind, Amos submitted his resume to the email on Jiang Chen's business card.

Jiang Chen already had an idea of where to put the Frankberg Doctor.

Until now, he only brought products back from the apocalypse, but never technology. In the short-term, this was not a problem, but it was not a long-term solution. Just like it was unfeasible for him to transport food to the apocalypse as the apocalypse must regain the ability to farm, the modern world must establish a complete and independent research system.

Or with the colonization ship from Harmony, he couldn't think of any scenario where he would win.

Future Group had enough power to ensure that the technologies won't be leaked. This was the necessary first step.

Including D++ language, basic artificial intelligence database, and other confidential technology, Jiang Chen will gradually open them up to him. Once this professor mastered the knowledge, Jiang Chen will use him to train a group of reliable technicians. By then, Future Technology will have their own research team.

That was Jiang Chen's plan.

After helping Doctor Amos settle down, it was close to noon time.

That afternoon was Celestial Trade's Aerospace Division's rocket launch date. As its first launch mission, Jiang Chen as the president didn't want to miss it.

After having lunch with Ayesha at home, Jiang Chen took a nap on the sofa. When it was close to one, Jiang Chen left for the island near the equator.

Compared to the barrenness a few months ago, the spacious island became more compact. Celestial Trade's post was located on the east side of the island on the elevated ground; the more flat west side was constructed into the launch facility. With the work of the construction robots, the basic facility used to execute the aerospace launch mission was mostly completed.

When Jiang Chen arrived on the island, he happened to see a few people in United Nations clothes blocked at the harbor by soldiers in kinetic skeletons. They were the observers sent by the UN to monitor the launch of the rocket to ensure Xin really did launch a rocket rather than an ICBM.

Because Jiang Chen had nothing to hide, he didn't refuse the observers from the UN. But when those people gained permission, they clearly forgot to submit their landing permission on the island from Celestial Trade, and hence they were stopped at the harbor.

"Mr. Jiang Chen, we need an explanation." A man in glasses walked in front of Jiang Chen, infuriated.

"Our soldiers are just following procedure. You must request for landing permission from Celestial Trade before you step onto the island. I'm sure the Presidential Palace reminded you of this," Jiang Chen explained while signaling the patrolling soldiers.

The soldier saluted and backed away.

Henry's expression looked rather awkward. As Jiang Chen said, they did receive a reminder but didn't think it was a big deal. Since they received permission from the Presidential Palace, in their eyes, it was the same as receiving permission from Xin.

They clearly didn't understand the status quo in Xin because the

person standing in front of them was the actual ruler of the country.

Calvin then walked out from the aerospace center and walked toward Jiang Chen's direction.

The scientist didn't feel pressured seeing the boss at all as he directly dragged Jiang Chen's arm to rush him.

"Hurry, you're finally here. The rocket launch preparation work has been completed. The launch could start at any moment."

With the fervor on Calvin's face, Jiang Chen face palmed.

As to the UN observers next Jiang Chen, they were clearly disinterested. They were not concerned with Xin possessing the ability to launch ICBM. They attended this launch ceremony as observers purely for the purpose of comforting the emotions of neighboring countries. Since F country had been continuously stating it was a conspiracy to test ballistic missiles disguised as a rocket launch.

In their eyes, rather than worrying about if it was a ballistic missile, they were more concerned if this thing could really launch. What if it ignited but didn't launch, or it flew sideways...

When Henry thought about this, he shivered.

He didn't feel safe at all standing there.

SCI: Science Citation Index

Chapter 543: Wait, where is the third stage rocket?

Celestial-1, the red letters were engraved onto the body of the rocket.

The declared launch project was a meteorological satellite. The use of meteorological satellites as the first launch was undoubtedly easier compared to other launch projects. But even so, for a small country without fundamental space technology, the first launch with satellite would be considered difficult to begin with.

Not only did the United Nations sent observers, but about thirty local or foreign journalists were also invited to the launch site as this exciting moment should be shared by people around the world. They were specifically allowed to enter the barracks, stand on the sentry tower, and film the launch process

For Xin, it was bound to be a historic moment.

An aerospace superpower?

The uneducated islanders never thought this would be a reality, but when they saw their new neighbors from all around the world discussing the problem with looks of disbelief, the original settlers of Pannu Islands felt a strong sense of proudness.

How is a country unity formed? It is through witnessing one's own country achieving things that other countries wouldn't believe and completing the unthinkable feat.

Who would have thought that a small sea island country that just finished a regime change with a total population of less than one hundred thousand people could become one of the few countries that possessed the ability to launch satellites independently? It was unbelievable.

But this unbelievable moment was destined to be recorded in history.

"A launch pad 30 meters in height? Are you joking? Mr. Calvin." Henry scanned the rocket outside nervously before looking toward Calvin, who was completing the last inspection with the workers.

30 meters high launch pad and Henry visualized the height of the rocket which was 32 to 34 meters or so. Celestial Trade would obviously not provide them with the specific design drawings of the rocket, but with his experience in the field of aerospace, he could deduce the specification of the rocket.

The miniature launch vehicle was not non-existent, but there was no way Henry believed that this tiny could have the capability to launch a miniature launch vehicle. Taking into account the rocket fuel push ratio, as well as the size of the rocket engine nozzle, to estimate the rocket thrust, he didn't think the rocket design was scientific at all.

Disregarding if the rocket could accelerate to the speed to overcome the Earth's gravitational pull or not. Henry was skeptical if the rocket could even fly out of the atmosphere or not.

To respond to the skepticism of the United Nations' observer...

"Do you think I'm joking with you?" Calvin raised his eyebrows and looked at the observer.

"Based on the structure of the rocket, I know this thing won't even lift off." Henry scorned.

"That just means you're ignorant. You will never know our rocket engine—"

"Ahem."

When Calvin heard Jiang Chen coughing, he immediately stopped talking. The NDA of Celestial Trade was no joke, and he realized he almost leaked some information.

Jiang Chen then looked at Henry.

"Mr. Henry, I remember you are an observer of the United

Nations and not the technical consultant hired by Celestial Trade. If you think the firecracker outside the window won't fly up, you can go back on the boat. I promise, when you go, there won't be any soldiers stopping you."

Henry's expression changed indefinitely with a mixture of emotions appearing.

Obviously, he won't run back to the boat now, or the media outside would capture his facial expression and put it on the headlines tomorrow along with the name scaredy cat. If the rocket launch failed, there would be no problems, since it would just mean that he had the foresight. But if the launch really succeeded, he would have slapped his own face.

Since Jiang Chen dared to stand there, that meant even if the launch were to fail, safety was not of concern. So Henry recollected himself and no longer spoke.

If Jiang Chen knew what he thought, perhaps he would burst out laughing.

There were no precautionary safety measures at all. The reason he dared to stand there because he was not concerned with the launch failing.

But some people obviously thought otherwise.

Henry shut his mouth, but the other observers were still whispering amongst themselves exchanging opinions.

"I can guarantee that this thing won't reach the stratosphere. The first stage launch vehicle is too short, even with NASA's technology, it would be impossible to do this. I suspect that they may have been off by a decimal during the design phase and no one realized it even after the rocket was built," A slightly chubby man turned his head and whispered to his colleague.

"Ah ha, other than the first part of the sentence, we share the same opinion," A female with curly hair spoke in a grave tone.

"The first part? You think they could fly it out?" The man in disbelief raised his voice by a notch.

"At most troposphere, if the launch experiences no technical difficulties." The woman mocked.

"Haha—"

Calvin glanced at the United Nations observers with infuriated flames in his eyes. Although he didn't design the rocket, it still took him a lot of effort to understand the technology behind it. As a researcher that seek the truth, he would not permit anyone to humiliate this launch technology with monumental meaning.

Calvin clenched his fists and was just about to go off at them.

But then, Jiang Chen patted him on the shoulder.

"Prove to them. Remember you are a scientist, not a boxer."

When Calvin heard Jiang Chen's words, he realized he was too emotional. Seeing Jiang Chen nod at him, he took a deep breath, forced the discontent out of his mind, walked to the control panel, and turned on the radio.

"Report rocket status."

"...Roger, currently compiling information... Rocket check work is complete! The rocket is prepared to launch!"

"This is the command center, attention all personnel, initiate launch sequence!" Calvin commanded into the radio and then looked at Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen nodded, walked beside the launch location, opened the tempered glass cover, put his hand above the launch button. Calvin turned on the radio again with his eyes locked onto the rocket outside of the window.

The launch center's atmosphere began to tense up. Henry hid away the arrogance in his eyes, and the United Nations observers stopped whispering as they all focused their attention on the

launch pad outside.

"Launch countdown initiated! 5!"

"4!"

"3!"

"2!"

"1!"

"0! Ignite!"

The instant Jiang Chen heard zero, he pressed the red launch button.

Grey smoke instantly covered the launch pad outside of the window. At the same time, a blinding red light broke through the smokescreen. The rocket separated from the launch pad, with the thrust of the ignited booster, the rocket began to accelerate and pierced into space.

Jiang Chen then casually stood aside.

Calvin's palms were covered in sweat as he anxiously stared at the numbers on the control panel.

Henry glanced at Jiang Chen completely calm and then peeked at the control panel. When he saw the height, speed, and acceleration increasing, the contempt in his eyes turned into sternness.

"Height 48 km, through the stratosphere!"

"Height 81 km, arrived in the warm layer, beginning to turn!"

"219 km! Celestial-1 successfully turned, first stage rocket beginning to separate!"

"Separation successful! Arrived at the first universe speed..."

"Height of 483 km, successfully broke through the atmosphere!"

"Height 1000 km, the rocket is continuing to accelerate!"

"..."

"Height of 35,000 km, the rocket is approaching the synchronous orbit! Second stage separate!"

On the screen, the second stage launch vehicle connected to the camera's secondary rocket slowly stalled, with the rocket head separating. At the same time, the rear end of the rocket head ignited, moving toward the farther orbit with the propulsion of the jet.

At this moment, everyone gazed at the slowly rising height of the control panel.

When it stopped at 35785 km, everyone held their breath!

It stopped!

It stopped! Not the slightest error!

"We have arrived at the synchronous orbit! We have succeeded!"

Followed by the exciting shout, all the workers inside the launch center threw their documents into the air in celebration. Calvin was as excited as a little kid as he threw his fists in the air and hugged his colleague.

Henry stared at the control panel as if he had just seen a ghost without a single word coming out of him.

Because of the atmosphere, Jiang Chen proudly smiled and leisurely walked to the United Nations observers that believed there was no way the launch would succeed.

The chubby man opened his mouth wide due to the shock. Someone could even fit an egg inside. Jiang Chen walked beside him and the female as he ridiculed.

"I am sorry that our rocket didn't experience a launch failure. The rocket not only went through the atmosphere, but it also arrived at the synchronous orbit."

At this point, Henry reacted as his soul finally returned to his body. He stared at Jiang Chen in disbelief.

"This, this is impossible ... wait, where is the third stage launch vehicle?"

"Third stage launch vehicle?" As if he had just heard something comical, Jiang Chen began laughing.

When it seemed like he had laughed enough, he paused, in front of the Henry with a stiff expression and said contemptuously

"We don't need that stuff."

Chapter 544: All that one could wish for

Sky eye type X1 meteorological observation satellite. As the name implies, it will be used in meteorological observation, disaster warning, and other related fields. But because the satellite uses a large array of detectors, large reflective telescope system, adaptive optical imaging technology, and real-time image transmission technology, the two meters diameter camera located at the near-earth side of the satellite allowed for an observation resolution of up to 0.1 m.

Military remote sensing satellites and civilian remote sensing satellites are similar in principle with the main differences reflected in the spectrum and the ground resolution requirements. Military remote sensing satellites mainly form its image in the visible or near infrared spectral with resolution better than 1 meter.

And the sky eye X1 weather observation satellite no doubt had reached the level of military satellites. Normally speaking, the observers from the United Nations would ask to verify whether the satellite was consistent with the declaration of the project, but because these people simply didn't believe that Xin could launch it successfully, so no mentioned the verification.

Of course, even if they brought it up, Jiang Chen could refuse. But then, F would use this opportunity to launch a controversy around this such as Xin launched a military satellite with indescribable purpose.

Henry stared at the smoke trial gradually fading in the air before he finally closed his mouth.

"Did it really succeed?"

He obviously heard the cheers just then, but he didn't want to accept this unbelievable fact.

[No need for a third stage launch vehicle? Was the satellite sent directly into orbit with a second stage launch vehicle? It was not impossible from a technical perspective, but did they consider the cost? The additional payload would require more fuel... Wait, their rocket size was not big either with the total length being 33 meters. This is absolutely unbelievable!]

But no one bothered with him. Jiang Chen headed outside to take interviews from the media while Calvin commanded the workers to open the solar panels, check the working status of the satellite, and collect firsthand weather information.

"Xin's weather report could be completed with Xin's own meteorological satellite. I would like to express my gratitude to Atria's ES for past weather reports, thank you."

Jiang Chen was used to being surrounded by cameras.

"Hello Mr, Jiang Chen, what inspired you to invest in aerospace?"

"Interest and potential." Jiang Chen pointed up with one finger at the place the rocket just flew by and smiled in front of the camera, "The future of humanity is there."

If a typical person said this, that person would be mocked for showing off. But because the words came from a technology tycoon, it would be remembered as a famous quote.

When Jiang Chen was being interviewed, he was thinking in his head. If one day, Celestial Trade really completed the blueprint in his heart where human activity expanded to beyond earth, and then to the synchronous orbit, the moon, and even Mars, and outside of the solar system, would people mark today as the start of everything?

Would the posture of him pointing to the sky and saying "humanity's future is there" become a statue and collected to become a part of the earth civilization museum.

After the interview and sending away the observers from

Nouveau York, Jiang Chen didn't immediately leave the island, but rather he went to look for Calvin who just finished the launch mission. Just in this short period of time, the scientists opened the prepared champagne and started a party in the cafeteria of the Aerospace Technology Center.

The bubbles of the champagne fizzed everyone, although it was not a holiday, the atmosphere was better than a holiday.

When Calvin saw Jiang Chen, his eyes lit up, and he immediately went to greet Jiang Chen with two bottles of champagne.

"Haha, boss, you need to drink a bottle before leaving."

"Yes, yes! This is our first rocket! Did you notice that observer's expressions? Haha, he looked like he just ate a fly."

"This feels so good, hahaha!"

Because of the atmosphere, and there was no other plans later, Jiang Chen took over the champagne in Calvin's hand, opened the screw, and started chugging the bottle.

Seeing the boss starting to chug, everyone began to blow whistles and started to clap. The female workers as rare as endangered animals also looked at him. While their actions were reserved, their shouts were no quieter than their male workers. When the boss finished the bottle, Calvin didn't back down. The unshaven scientist didn't look like he could drink, but he showed otherwise.

There was no doing business with alcohol here, just purely a bunch of scientists celebrating their work successfully sent into the sky. The equipment and parts were "purchased" by Celestial Trade, but the entire rocket was assembled with their own hands; it was like their baby.

Once everyone had fun, it was starting to get late. Their home was on Ange Island, and their transportation was taken care of by a ferry at fixed times. Only a few chose to live in the employee housing provided on the island. For example, Calvin that wanted

to sleep in the lab, or people that requested for overtime.

After the cafeteria that was in a complete mess was cleaned up, the celebration was officially over. Jiang Chen watched them get on the boat and grabbed Calvin who was returning to his place.

"The launch work was successful today."

"Thank you for your compliment." Calvin smiled but then sighed. "But the design of the rocket from start to finish had nothing to do with us."

"Don't think like that." Jiang Chen laughed and patted him on the shoulder, "You only have a higher starting point. I have transferred the related technology to you. I'm looking forward to you creating better rockets with them!"

In terms of technology, the two worlds were unequal. But in terms of creativity and innovation, the people from both worlds were no different. Aerospace was a frontier field that required imagination. With the same technology, the masterpiece created by Jiang Lin may not be better than the rocket designed by Calvin.

Of course, he must put in more effort.

"Mhmm, I promise." Calvin smiled.

There was no need to promise because aerospace is his dream. Jiang Chen provided him with the technology and platform, and Jiang Chen did not doubt that he could make his dream into a reality.

"The launch mission today was extremely successful, and this is your accomplishment. As a reward, I will contact the finance department for a 2 million bonus. Half of it is yours while the other half you can distribute.

"You should have said that during the celebration, they will praise you as a generous god." Calvin joked.

He didn't really lack money since when Jiang Chen purchased his

company at a premium, he received 10 million.

"Hahaha, that's unfortunate then." Jiang Chen smiled.

He paused, looked at Calvin, and said sternly.

"In the first half of next year, you'll have 12 launch missions. It will be busy, so I hope you are prepared."

"Two rockets per month? Are you making dumplings in the sky?"
Calvin was stunned.

Launching a rocket was no joke. Although they possessed the technology to retrieve the first stage rocket, Celestial-1's launch cost around 50 million.

"Are you afraid?" Jiang Chen raised his eyebrows.

"Completely the opposite. I'm eager to take on the challenge." Calvin responded directly to Jiang Chen's challenge with a visible smile on his face.

The thing the aerospace department worried the most about was the low profit of commercial launch missions and hence the inability to acquire funding. Jiang Chen's words answered the concerns in his mind. With sufficient funding, even if the number of missions doubled, he wouldn't even blink an eye!

Are you making dumplings in the sky: The analogy is putting dumplings in boiling water and its appearance. The boiled dumplings look crowded and stuffed inside the pan. This analogy refers to the crowdedness of a particular place.

Chapter 545: Battery Patent

On the ocean two hundred nautical miles east of Pannu Islands, with the escort of the frigate installed with the Type-50 J-unit electromagnetic pulse cannon, two construction vessels were deployed on the surface and retrieved the first stage rocket falling with under engine propulsion.

In the distance, there were a few patrol boats without flags. While maintaining a safe distance, they monitored the first stage rocket launch vehicle retrieve work. Because they were in public sea area, thus Celestial Trade's frigate didn't bother with the monitoring boats. Also, the boats just aimed its cannon in the distance as a warning.

When the first stage launch vehicle successfully landed and was transported onto the construction vessel, the patrol boats retreated.

If it was easy to guess who sent the patrol boats. UA didn't care about Xin's aerospace technology, Atria didn't care about international affairs, and there were only two countries active in this area. The economic relationship between New Guinea and Xin was strengthening by the day and obviously would not display this unfriendly gesture.

Country F had been cautious about the rising Xin. When Xin first declared the launch project, they were the first one to jump out in rejection. It was because of national security concern since they didn't think a small country with a total population less than their land force could pose any security threat to their country. It was purely out of a twisted mentality of a poor neighbour where the small country they looked down upon suddenly possessed aerospace capability unfathomable to them.

Of course, they would feel worse now. Because Celestial Trade not only possessed the ability to launch a satellite independently,

they possessed the advanced technology to retrieve the first stage launch vehicle.

Xin's rocket launch had heavily damaged their national confidence.

But what Jiang Chen didn't know was, they were already in a complete mess. How are they so good at finding trouble?

....

Future Biology's nutrient supply was well received on the international market. In order to target the dynamic market, the general manager Tao Ming used the recipe provided by Jiang Chen and pushed out four types of nutrient supply. While it increased the raw ingredients usage as well as production, the move also opened up the discount market.

The monthly production of nutrient supply was at an astounding four million boxes. After the cost of goods sold, the average net profit was 371.1 USD with a total profit after tax breaking the one billion mark! The profitability was near the level of Future Technology which absolutely surprised Jiang Chen.

Tao Ming was ambitious with Future Biology's development as he promised Jiang Chen while pumping his chest to transform nutrient supply as the healthiest fast food of the 21st century. And the reason behind his passion was due to the stock option plan proposed by Jiang Chen. Jiang Chen offered a 3% dividend to him and Zhan Shujie responsible for production. As long as they continued to serve Future Group, they will continuously enjoy this dividend.

On the other hand, the contract from Russia's national defense department brought Future Biology a sizable income. But compared to the popularity in the commercial market, the military contract performed paled in comparison. Tao Ming did suggest to Jiang Chen either to raise prices or to stop the contract with Russia's defense department in order to maximize their profit per

unit. Since Russia with increase woe in its economy didn't seem like a generous buyer.

But Jiang Chen didn't agree with his proposition. Since as the president of Future Group, he not only needed to consider a subsidiary's profit. While Russia might not be the ideal buyer, they were an ally worth the partnership.

While Tao Ming didn't necessarily understand, he still followed the president's decision. But he seemed to have an odd misunderstanding behind Jiang Chen's insistence and euphemistically expressed the message – don't fall for the beauty.

But Jiang Chen was completely oblivious to what he was trying to tell him.

At least until when Jiang Chen was leaving the company, passed by the lounge, and glanced at a magazine open on the table. Because the person in the magazine looked familiar, he picked it up and took a glance.

When he saw it, his expression suddenly became interesting.

The magazine was a fashion magazine targeted toward females with most of its content either about celebrities or makeup. The content itself wasn't an issue. The issue was when he saw the picture on the page, it was of the day when he sent the drunk Natasha home.

The article itself didn't comment on the "intimate" relationship between Future Group's president Jiang Chen and Russia's diplomat, but it used the topic to comment on Natasha's style and vibe, as well as shamelessly providing tricks to attract males...

Jiang Chen closed the magazine and felt extremely awkward.

No wonder Yao Ming was careful with what he said because there was a misunderstanding. The Russian diplomat was a mistress of the boss, and as a manager, it was hard for him to comment on their business relationship with Russia. But he couldn't let the

"pillow whisper" freely affect the company's profitability. Therefore he said it subtly.

Jiang Chen flipped to the front of the magazine. It was published a month ago by a small publisher on Coro Island. A contemptuous smile appeared on his face.

Someone dared to report his scandal; does the boss of the magazine feel like he has lived too long?

But he only thought about it before he put down the magazine back on the table.

Some of the things were okay even if revealed to the public. Disguising may cause people to suspect the backdoor relationship hidden behind it. Xin didn't establish information control purely because it was not necessary to give trouble to the media over this.

But this event reminded Jiang Chen of the importance of controlling public opinion. As to how to execute it, it was not through enacting a law, since he had too much money, he could easily just acquire a controlling share.

On the other hand, Future Industrial was officially established and registered in Xin as a subsidiary to Future Group. The current portfolio consisted of only an electric car battery, and the research force came from the three European automakers Jiang Chen acquired. It was hard for mechanical parts such as a battery to use similar encryption technology as the Phantom. Therefore Jiang Chen didn't plan on bringing out the highly advanced nuclear fusion battery but instead selected the decade ahead solid lithium-air battery.

In the international scientific community, the study of lithium-air batteries had come to the state of near breakthrough. The shackles preventing its commercialization was mainly in how to ensure that after repeated charge and discharge, the battery can still maintain its original power level. Cambridge University was currently at the forefront of the world with its establishment of

the lithium-air battery laboratory model. The model could be charged and discharged more than 2000 times, the energy efficiency of the theory exceeded 90%.

Optimistically, it will be possible to achieve mass production and application of the solid lithium-air battery by 2020.

Jiang Chen obtained the outdated solid lithium-air battery technology from the library in the apocalypse and ordered the researchers at Fallout Shelter 027 to produce a prototype with 3D printing, prepare the related technology into documents, and then Jiang Chen could transfer the information to Future Industrial's car battery scientist.

Including the electrode material, membrane components, new electrolytes, and high-performance additives, and other technologies, all through the PCT route, a total of 147 patents were submitted using international patent applications in many countries around the world. The purpose was to strive to form an absolute patent monopoly and completely blocking others from doing so.

There was no reason not to apply for the patent because four years later, other people will also apply for a patent.

As to some of the material production process, Jiang Chen didn't rush to apply for the patent because he didn't plan to build the factory far away. The plant could be built in the industrial base on Ange Island or the neighboring New Guinea was not a bad choice either.

Chapter 546: Phantom Online!

The news of Xin successfully launching a meteorological satellite caused a small earthquake in global news before quickly settling down. The national "Olympic project" of aerospace was no longer as novel as before - people were just shocked that this small island country in the Pacific once again made headlines before everyone tucked the news away in the back of their heads.

For some reason, the observers from the United Nations chose to conceal the two-stage rocket launching technology Celestial Trade used, and Celestial Trade didn't publicly disclose it to the media either, so the technology wasn't made aware to the general public.

But Jiang Chen was certain that NASA, also based in Nouveau York along with the United Nations, must know this information and was concerned about how to handle the hearing from the UA Congress. They received a large amount of funding each year, yet a small country in the Pacific managed to surpass them in technological advancements...

Compared to the peaceful Xin, neighboring country F was in the midst of troubled times.

The guerrillas of Moro successfully occupied the city of Dawo weeks ago and established it as the capital of Moro. Country F obviously wouldn't just give in. Aquino first denounced Santos as a terrorist and criminal then sent two additional infantry divisions and a UA-trained modern mechanical brigade to launch a large-scale operation on MLL Island.

At the same time, the UA had completed its governmental transition and assisted F in denouncing Moro's independence movement. They also sent out fighter jets to attack the command center of the guerrillas.

The battle once again entered a stalemate.

On the other hand, the vice president of Xin and minister of economics visited New Guinea and brought along the representative from Future Mining as well as businessmen from Ange Island in charge of projects exceeding one billion USD.

Yang Yuan seemed to have gotten over Su Fei; he put all his energy into his work in an attempt to forget about her. On the visit to New Guinea, he went as the general manager of Future Mining and managed to secure five steel plants and two aluminum processing plants to move high-pollution production from Ange Island to the undeveloped neighboring countries.

BHP's ores were subsequently transported to New Guinea for crude treatment before they were transported to Xin for further processing with special equipment to create a unique steel-aluminum alloy. The alloy was extremely light, but the strength and hardness were no inferior to a titanium alloy. Jiang Chen didn't explain the purpose of the alloy to Yang Yuan; he just vaguely explained that these alloys would be used to complete a special project.

While the Vice President was visiting New Guinea, Zhang Yapin signed eleven policies to simplify the tourism visa application process, lowering tourism taxes with the intent of stimulating the tourism industry. Following the introduction of these policies, Xin established the foundation for a prosperous tourism policy. 2017 was destined to be the year that marked the start of Xin's tourism boom.

Wei Yun, who already received the news from Jiang Chen, had fully prepared for this day. He featured the Heart of the Sea, underwater hotel, hot spring beach, sea maze and other tourism activities on advertisements on two forms of media - web and TV. The ads even made it to billboards at Times Square.

Coro Island's airport opened its newly built runaway to meet the demand of 1700 departing and arriving flights per day. The airport also increased direct flights to major metropolises around the

world including Shangjin, Wanghai, Xiangjiang, and Los Santos to save the trouble of having to connect through Autria.

On the first day of increased direct flights, the number of people entering the border with a tourist visa increased from 1347 to 2397 people and continued to rise at a daunting speed. Based on estimations from Xin's tourism ministry, visitors from the first quarter of 2017 could break 100 thousand and reach 500 thousand by the second quarter.

Based on the influence of this disclosed data, the three international rating agencies all increased Xin's investment rating which facilitated a large sum of international money flowing into Xin.

President Zhang Yapin couldn't stop his mouth from smiling when he heard the news. Xin's GDP increased by 100% in 2016 and managed to completely transition from a fishing and plantation-based economy to a country focused on manufacturing and tourism.

Future Group's subsidiaries all had stellar performance but compared to Future Technology, all of them added together still paled in comparison.

The first 30 million Phantom helmets that entered the market were sold out on the first day and were promptly sold for three times the original price on the black market. Future Technology had to make an announcement to limit each Future account to purchase a maximum of two Phantom helmets which somewhat alleviated the situation.

Even then, all subsequent Phantoms released into the global market were sold out on the first day. A lot of netizens unaware of the story started to criticize Future Technology of being too egotistical and using the "starved market technique" to bully consumers that continuously supported them.

But Future Technology had their own difficulties since millions

of helmets distributed across the world meant only a few million units per country. In order to meet market demands, it required time.

Regardless of how much those people cursed, they would immediately order the new batch of helmets once they were made available. Indeed, Future Technology's product didn't fall short of their expectations.

Once all 80 million helmets were sold, once the costs of transportation, production, tax, and other miscellaneous costs were accounted for, the average profit per helmet was 791.1 USD and the total profit came to a ridiculous 64.07 billion USD! The daunting profitability scared all of Wall Street.

In the field of virtual reality, Future Technology, with the absolute technological advantage, didn't have any competition. Regardless of how the patent offices in each country pushed for patent rights, Future Technology didn't budge at all.

With an absolute technological advantage, Future Technology didn't need to make the technology publically available in exchange for protection.

The moment the 64.07 billion in profits was settled, the first thing Jiang Chen did was pay back his loan with interest to the Rothschild bank.

When they recuperated their loan, the head of the Rothschild bank attentively expressed to Jiang Chen to please contact them if Future Group ever encountered any problems with cash flow in the future. Jiang Chen only smiled at the offer without responding.

Since Future Technology's profitability was more than enough to meet the expansion demands of Future Group, he didn't need to take out loans anymore.

Following the official sales of the Phantom helmet, Future Technology and Godly Land's official site published the official

release date of the first immersive virtual reality MMORPG, closed the colosseum mode, and opened character registration.

The initial virtual reality helmet only had a grey cubical room with a simple web-viewing function. Even then, some people were happy to wear the helmet for an entire night. A lot of tech companies constantly jammed Future Technology's phone line with the hopes of resolving the compatibility problems between their software and the helmet. This included Penguin that desperately wanted to expand their social media platform.

Future Technology gave a standard response. Because of technical limitations, the Phantom helmet's system could only support Godly Land as well as their internal web browser. With improvements in software, the compatibility problem would gradually be solved.

Before the start of official cooperation, Future Technology still needed to consider which areas could be worked on cooperatively and which areas must be controlled.

Just as the world was in frenzy over immersive virtual reality technology, Jiang Chen accompanied the delegation of Xin to board the flight to Shangjin, thus beginning his visit to Hua.

Chapter 547: Too Many Choices

The company most hostile toward Future Technology's product launch was Penguin.

Some time ago, Penguin acquired Wanghai Lexiang Technology, but the Phantom helmet made their deepoon virtual reality equipment look like complete junk. The plan of bundling Penguin's social media platform and deepoon in order to achieve "Virtual reality + Big Penguin Strategy" died in its infancy.

In other words, other than for nostalgia's sake, no one would play the outdated NDS once they had a smartphone.

The awkward situation they faced was the same idea.

If their deepoon never had any emotional impact on its users in the first place...

"Useless." Ma Huateng gazed at the document on his desk and swore after holding back for so long.

<The Imagination of Virtual Reality MMORPG! The Utopia of the Virtual World!> <Future Technology's indecisive stance on attracting cooperation is perhaps due to a deficiency in technology?> <The signal to cooperate! The domestic VR industry may be welcoming a prosperous age? Related industries could receive a one hundred billion deal! Recommending the following stocks...> Whether it was positive or negative news, the media all referred to Future Technology's dominance in the VR industry. Future Technology's growing influence made Penguin Cooperation feel a deep fear. When they realized that they couldn't learn from Future Technology's product, Boss Ma experienced a deep helplessness.

The ability they were most well-versed in was useless against their opponent.

The assistant stood beside the boss, pretending not to hear the

boss's rant as he stared straight at a flower through the window to pass the time while praying the blame wouldn't spread to him.

Ma Huaheng inhaled several times and picked up the teacup beside his hand. The bitter tea made him calmer, whether it was due to its price or identity. This tea was a custom product either: (1) reserved for representative meetings or (2) gifted by a powerful person after the meeting.

When he thought about this, a curvature appeared on his face and his eyebrows were no longer furrowed.

At least from a policy point of view, Penguin wouldn't lose.

Seeing the boss calming down, the assistant felt relieved and finally reported important information to him.

"Boss, Xin's delegate will arrive in Shangjin tomorrow morning at ten. Jiang Chen will accompany the delegation—"

"I know. What's the message on that side?"

"The message from Shangjin is that they want us to keep in contact with Future Group."

[Keep in contact?]

Ma Huateng furrowed his brows as this ambiguous message made him unclear of the directions. How should he keep in contact? What was the outcome the people at the top wanted to see? Regarding the era-defining technology, were they not tempted?

Seeing that the boss was silent, the assistant attempted to go on.

"Boss, do you need me to book a ticket?"

"Of course," Ma Huateng said with an undertone. "... Our primary focus is still on software; it was a mistake to enter the hardware market. Regardless, QQ must gain an advantage over the Phantom helmet. It isn't too late to partner up now."

When the people at the top mentioned maintaining contact, he had to facilitate meetings for the partnership. Because of the

uniqueness of Xin, Hua would do their best to win over their ally. Conversely, it would be the same for Xin as they would try to promote cooperation between Future Technology and Hua enterprises.

But his assistant didn't think nearly as far.

"Will Future Technology give up the market share on social media? They revealed their ambitions when they fought over market share with Future 1.0. If they internally bundle social media software in the helmet and use the compatibility issue to prevent us from entering the market, it'll be hard for us to win."

In 2007, Microsoft's VISTA operating system didn't support QQ for a period of time and that truly scared Penguin. Fortunately, the problem was solved in subsequent updates but VISTA's penetration rate was low compared to XP and Windows 7 later on. But everyone knew that if Microsoft really wanted to take out QQ through the compatibility issue and used the bundling method to push MSN, then only death awaited for Penguin.

Of course, they would never do that.

The reason was...

"That's not the right way to say it." Boss Ma's eyes were narrowed and he laughed mischievously. "In this country, things don't always work the way they want it to work unless they want to face investigations on their monopoly."

This sentence didn't sound convincing coming from his mouth. Speaking of a monopoly, who else to say that than BAT?

While Penguin was discussing their strategy on negotiating with Future Group, at a house in Shangjin, two elders were playing GO.

"That Future Group, Jiang Chen, certainly has some capabilities." The elder with white hair suddenly nodded with a smile while his fingers held a black piece.

The elder in a vest laughed.

"To be able to receive such a comment from Old Liu, this kid certainly must be amazing."

"That's not the right way to say it. Wasn't your Zhou family the first to bet on him?"

"The word 'bet' ruins the mood - it was just my kid who happened to meet him by fate." Although Zhou Antai said this in a humble way, his face still glowed with pride.

His kid who stayed in Wanghai brought an ally with such potential to his family when he came back home. Speaking of which, the reason why Jiang Chen chose to partner with the Zhou family was largely because the Wang family was the "matchmaker."

"Dehai... was too overzealous." Liu Xiangguo's piece hovered but didn't fall on the board. He sighed and kept shaking his head.

The Dehai he referred to was Wang Dehai in Wanghai.

When Zhou Antai heard his old friend's comment, he felt joyous inside but he didn't display it. He subtlety asked: "Is this based on fact?"

Liu Xiangguo looked at his old friend with a grin and refocused on the GO board.

"This is a difficult move."

"How's it difficult?"

"Difficult because there are too many choices." Liu Xiangguo seemed to be studying the board as he muttered to himself.

"Antai, you tell me - should I take out your piece or should I wait?"

After Zhou Antai heard his friend's straightforwardness, he slapped his thigh and laughed.

"If you ask me, I want you to take it easy on me."

Liu Xiangguo glared at him but also laughed.

"Although we've been friends for a long time, you know that when we play, I never take it easy."

Sigh "It's okay. It's not my first time losing." Zhou Antai waved his hand nonchalantly.

Although his words were nonchalant, his eyes never left the board.

His hovering black piece was finally planted on the board.

Zhou Antai gazed at the board. His pupils contracted before he blissfully smiled.

From the start, his old friend had been playing tricks on him. It was only when the piece finally landed on the board did he start to understand.

Chapter 548: Returning to Homeland

He hadn't been back in how long?

If he counted, it was close to one year.

Jiang Chen stared at the runway zipping by in the window as he zoned out.

From the glimpse he caught before the plane landed, the homeland wasn't any different compared to when he left. The only difference was his state of mind - when he left, he felt rushed, but now he was calm and collected upon his return.

It was the origin of dragon heritage, the heart of the republic. During his time in university, he visited this place with the intention of expanding his views, but it was only today that he understood the true definition of "view."

Views weren't observable until one reached a certain level.

The welcome ceremony was hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Although Xin and Hua's political ideologies were different, they shared the same cultural background. Therefore, during Xin's presidential visit, Hua demonstrated the highest level of courtesy to highlight the demeanor of the superpower.

The leaders of the two countries warmly shook hands. Accompanied by men in suits, they went to the diplomatic regiment. The media stood on both sides of the red carpet in an orderly fashion, with the cameras capturing the friendship between the two countries live.

Jiang Chen left all the problematic issues to Zhang Yapin as he stayed in the business delegation while avoiding the media.

He didn't bring any bodyguards this time. Ayesha acted as his assistant carrying a briefcase and following half a step behind him.

Responsible for greeting them were mainly people from the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as the leaders in charge of economic and trade cooperation. Once they met, the officials in charge warmly greeted Jiang Chen and shook his hands with force.

...

Jiang Chen could clearly sense that while the officials in suits were meeting the entire delegation, their attention was more or less focused on him. He could visibly sense their attentiveness and the reason behind their attentiveness, without a doubt, was because of the message from the "top."

It was indeed a good signal.

The tips of Jiang Chen's mouth curled up when he thought about this.

For this Hua trip, it was a positive beginning.

...

On the first day of the visit was mainly a diplomatic conference, and the business forum was to be held at noon the next day. The only other special event today was the evening banquet. Surrounded by the reception staff, it made him feel grateful to return home.

But among the security personnel, he was surprised to see an acquaintance.

Although the gray coat looked very low-key, among the crowd with all suits, it still looked somewhat conspicuous. Perhaps he was personally aware of this - he had been standing on the outside of security personnel.

[Dagger?]

If it was Dagger, his face was too young, but this figure gave him a familiar feeling.

Just as he thought, Jiang Chen met his gaze.

Without any communication, he only nodded to Jiang Chen

before turning away from his direction. It looked like he knew Jiang Chen, but Jiang Chen didn't know where he saw him before.

When Jiang Chen arrived at the hotel, he asked the reception staff he had been chatting with about that security personnel.

"Oh, that person. He's a bodyguard from the General Staff Department. The top placed great importance on your security," the reception staff explained to Jiang Chen.

"I just feel like he looks familiar. Could you tell me his name?"

The reception staff only hesitated for a moment, thinking it wasn't confidential, so he told Jiang Chen.

"Miao Jun. He was previously assigned a mission in Wanghai, perhaps you saw him then."

When Jiang Chen heard this name, he immediately remembered. Miao Jun was the new agent with Dagger. But because he hadn't seen him for a long time, that guy appeared different. The impulsive young man was no longer there and had been replaced by a mature and resolute individual.

Jiang Chen didn't know what happened that transformed this guy into a qualified soldier. He previously thought he wouldn't be staying long in this role, but he now changed his mind.

The hotel was five stars. From the bodyguards patrolling at the entrance to the magnificent interior design, it was a special facility used to accommodate honored guests.

At the entrance to the hotel, Jiang Chen saw Xia Shiyu, who had been waiting for a while. He knew from the phone that she would arrive in Shangjin a day before, but he didn't expect that she would also be treated as a foreign delegate.

In a clean, black female suit, her black hair was curled at the back of her head. Her gorgeous face that didn't like to smile bloomed like a cold and elegant flower on a mountaintop.

Their relationship couldn't be described as intimate, but their reunion after so long still made his heart pump a little faster.

And the increase in heart rate originated from her smile, the smile that could melt ice.

"Long time no see."

"Not too long since we did a video call." Jiang Chen stopped beside Xia Shiyu.

They already arrived at the hotel and they had the rest of the time free. The reception staff beside Jiang Chen certainly knew how to read the mood. The moment he saw Xia Shiyu, he speculated that there might be an intimate relationship between the two of them, so he walked away quietly.

"Did you not miss me?"

"Of course I did." Although his smile wasn't proper, the meaning he wanted to express wasn't fake at all.

With Future Group growing by the day, the only person he could count on was just Xia Shiyu. Perhaps it sounded narcissistic, but he still trusted Xia Shiyu to never betray him, whether it was from her previous deeds or her personal affection.

She stared at Jiang Chen's face and her lips gently trembled. She had a lot of things to say to him, but now that she finally saw him, with her difficulty in expressing her feelings, she was unable to turn her thoughts into words.

"... tomorrow's business forum, the three giants BAT will be at the scene. Cooperation between the internet and VR industries will be the first part of the business talks." Xia Shiyu looked away.

From her hesitating lips, she squeezed out the words as a means of escape.

"Mhmm, I know." Without noticing the fluctuation in Xia Shiyu's emotions, Jiang Chen nodded and replied to her with a comforting

smile.

With her face beginning to blush, Xia Shiyu didn't look at Jiang Chen in the eyes.

Just then, she noticed Ayesha behind Jiang Chen. Her expression turned perplexed.

It was already nearing lunchtime. The representative of Xin's businessmen and Jiang Chen had to arrive early. After exchanging a few more words with Xia Shiyu, he left for his room upstairs.

Sensing Xia Shiyu had words to say to her, Ayesha didn't follow Jiang Chen but looked at the very beautiful "first lady."

"I won't give up." After a monetary silence, Xia Shiyu stared into the girl's eyes and righteously said.

"Welcome."

Ayesha replied with earnestness as she spoke from the bottom of her heart.

She genuinely wanted Xia Shiyu to face her heart and didn't mind becoming "sisters" with her at all. If it was her, she could help him more, unlike herself who only knew how to fight and kill.

But perhaps because Ayesha wasn't good at expressing herself either, her invitation sounded like a "victor's taunt" to Xia Shiyu's ears.

Xia Shiyu bit her lips in a perplexed state as the will to fight ignited in her eyes.

Without speaking any more words, she turned around, leaving Ayesha full of questions.

Ayesha stared at her back and thought with seriousness.

She felt there wouldn't be any positive results if they continued to drag this on...

[Perhaps I should help her out?]

In her blue pupils, mischievousness sparked.

Chapter 549: How much sincerity do you have?

After all, it was a welcome luncheon. Naturally, the rules and traditions couldn't be avoided.

The luncheon lasted from 11 o'clock to 1 in the afternoon, while the real meal time was only an hour. But Jiang Chen didn't complain in the slightest because the dishes at the state banquet really were impeccable. Additionally, the concierge really made him feel like this was his home away from home.

Responsible for the reception of Jiang Chen was Liu Haotian. Not too tall with a buzz cut, he looked very sharp. The way he spoke was humorous yet ethereal. During his stay in Hua, he would accompany Jiang Chen to his daily activities whether he was heading home to visit relatives or examining investment opportunities outside of the province. His main duty was acting as his driver and at the same time, resolving any problems for guests to maintain Hua's international image.

Although he had no plans in the afternoon, Jiang Chen clearly underestimated the cordiality of the Ministry of Economic Development. The Phantom helmet was only on the shelf for two weeks but the analysts of Wall Street revalued Future Group's worth at a daunting 500 billion USD. It was a conservative figure based on the uncertainty of the maintenance costs of the supercomputer Future Technology was using as well as the research and development costs of the helmet.

If Future Group went public on NASDAQ and disclosed its operation costs, no one would doubt its market cap could exceed 700 million and replace Apple as the tech company with the highest market cap.

To get a delicious piece of the pie and create ties with a company that originated from Hua, the Ministry of Economic Development

obviously wouldn't relinquish this opportunity. All the beneficial policies were presented to Jiang Chen with only one requirement: Future Group had to build plants and invest in Hua.

Ideally, those new plants would produce the Phantom Helmet.

But they had discussions over tea for an entire afternoon without making any progress. Jiang Chen didn't agree to make any investments, especially with regards to building more plants. In fact, he consciously avoided the topic.

While the people from the Ministry of Business Development were eager, they had no other plans. They made all the policies the higher-ups permitted available to him, but Jiang Chen didn't seem interested at all, which made them bewildered.

Is this guy not here to talk business? When they thought about the mission the higher-ups gave them and looked at Jiang Chen drinking tea, the representative from the Ministry of Business Development had a helpless feeling.

Of course, they were confused.

Jiang Chen was here to talk business, but not with the Ministry of Business Development. They were, at most, the pawns sent from the top to test him. Even if there was no material progress in negotiations, the people at the top wouldn't give them any trouble for it.

Jiang Chen was waiting for a person with decision-making power. If Hua placed enough emphasis on him, that person would arrive very soon.

It was just as he thought.

After the end of the dinner, Jiang Chen sat in the Hongqi L9 waiting in front of the Shangjin Restaurant. Liu Haotian, responsible for his reception, sat in the driver's seat but didn't drive off after starting the car.

"Do you have any engagements arranged afterward?"

"No."

"An important person wants to see you."

Jiang Chen looked at Liu Haotian through the rearview mirror.

"Who?"

"An elder. Don't worry, no need to be cautious. It is a good thing." Liu Haotian put on a smile to respond to Jiang Chen's gaze. "If it is convenient for you now, I can take you there now. Of course, if you have other plans, tomorrow is okay too."

"Now is fine." Jiang Chen leaned back in his chair and said casually, "There is a business forum I need to attend tomorrow, I might be busy."

Liu Haotian smiled and drove off.

...

The scenery outside the window flashed by and gradually, the sheen of prosperity faded when they turned into an older part of the city. The car didn't drive for long before they stopped at an ancient but magnificent manor. The security personnel standing at the door put his hand on his waist. It wasn't until he saw Liu Haotian getting out of the car that he let his guard down.

Liu Haotian opened the car door for Jiang Chen and courteously invited him out.

"Please, Mr. Jiang."

Jiang Chen raised his head to read the words on the gate of the manor before he looked at Liu Haotian with a gaze full of deeper meaning.

"I originally thought you were just a driver. My mistake."

"Not at all. I'm just an ordinary reception staff member," Liu Haotian said humbly.

Jiang Chen smiled without saying anything more. He stepped

over the high doorsill and headed directly into the manor.

On the door he just walked through were two giant words written with calligraphy.

<Liu Family>

The layout of the manor was in good taste with elegance; the rock gardens were complementary to each other. Although Jiang Chen wasn't well-versed in traditional culture, he still could see that it was a combination of characteristics from a northern climate combined with characteristics of Suzhou gardens.

Although there wasn't anything particularly extravagant inside, Jiang Chen knew well that to own such a large manor in Shangjin, where land was equivalent to gold, money alone wasn't enough.

With Liu Haotian's guidance, Jiang Chen followed the pebbled stone path and arrived at the tea room in the main building. Here, he saw an elder with all white hair. From the courteous expression on Liu Haotian's face, the status of the elder was important.

The layout of the tea room was simple - there was only a table, a chess board, and a cup of tea...

It was tea again. Jiang Chen's eyebrows twitched. He drank tea all afternoon, so his stomach felt agitated at the scene of tea.

"Are you not going to sit?" Seeing Jiang Chen wasn't taking any action, the elder pleasantly asked.

Jiang Chen then politely smiled and sat on the sofa across from the elder.

"How should I address you?"

"I am Liu Xiangguo. By age, it is fair for you to call me uncle." The elder poured hot tea for Jiang Chen and himself.

Liu Haotian looked at his father, surprised, but quickly moved his gaze elsewhere.

"Uncle Liu," Jiang Chen cleverly addressed him.

Perhaps pleased with the way Jiang Chen addressed him, Uncle Liu smiled and examined Jiang Chen with the eyes of an elder looking at the young. His cloudy but still shrewd eyes hid their sharpness within the rising white cloud.

Although it was disguised, Jiang Chen could still sense the elder prying into his life with his gaze. But even if he sensed this, he didn't react and replied honestly to the obvious inquiring gaze.

"Uncle Liu invited me over just to have tea with me?"

Unable to see through Jiang Chen, Liu Xiangguo retracted his prying gaze without a change in expression.

"No particular plan. I have seen you quite a few times on the news. With this opportunity, I wanted to meet you."

"Oh? Am I fortunate enough to know Uncle Liu's view of me?"

"Stellar individual."

Jiang Chen took a moment to process this before he humbly said:

"You're overcomplimenting me."

At Jiang Chen's modesty, Liu Xiangguo smiled and took a sip of the tea without making any further comments.

Just as Jiang Chen wryly thought the old man would act identically to the people from the Ministry of Business Development that afternoon and play riddles with him for half the day, Liu Xiangguo put down his teacup and suddenly said:

"From your facial appearance, Mr. Jiang is someone who likes to dive straight into the topic, so I won't play riddles with you." He paused. "How sincere are you with regards to the economic and trade cooperation between our two countries or cooperation between Future Group and Hua?"

When Jiang Chen heard this, his disinterested expression instantly disappeared with a smile emerging on his face.

Finally.

He had been waiting for this sentence for too long.

Chapter 550: Allies

"My sincerity depends on your sincerity." Jiang Chen looked straight into Liu Xiangguo's eyes. "And before that, I need to know what you want."

"Virtual reality technology."

Jiang Chen sighed after hearing this answer and pushed his hands against the armrest.

"If that is your sincere wish, our conversation can end right here."

Jiang Chen motioned to stand up.

Liu Haotian, who was standing at the door, looked at Jiang Chen in disbelief as he didn't expect the conversation to head in that direction.

The atmosphere in the room instantly intensified.

"Wait." Just like Jiang Chen expected, Liu Xiangguo stopped him.

Shrewdness sparked in the elder's eyes as his eagle-like gaze locked onto his face without any disguise.

"You were the first one who dared to speak to me like this and also the youngest." Liu Xiangguo took a sip of his tea and spoke emotionlessly.

"Here." Jiang Chen added.

"Hahahaha, you're right. Here." As if he heard something funny, the elder laughed and slowly put the cup down on the table.

The tense atmosphere instantly faded.

"Sincerity? You won't acquiesce on demands for virtual reality technology at all? Liu Xiangguo's face instantly returned to a kind expression.

"That's right."

"What if I make you unable to do business 'here'?" Although this was spoken nonchalantly, Liu Xiangguo placed emphasis on that word.

"Then we will fully retreat."

"Fully retreat?" Liu Xiangguo paused and looked at Jiang Chen, quite intrigued. "You don't feel pained about losing access to a market of 1.4 billion people at all?"

"You don't feel pained about letting technology at least twenty years ahead of its time slip away from your own hands?" Jiang Chen returned the question.

"Our country never lacks people with talent."

"That's if your people with talent are able to develop immersive virtual reality technology."

"I don't need the virtual stuff."

"I'm not here to pitch it to you. That includes all innovative technology from Future Technology in the present and future."

Jiang Chen's words made Liu Xiangguo silent.

Before the start of the conversation, the top officials began discussing Future Group. The response from the scientific institute was pessimistic. In the next thirty years, they could not achieve the level of sophistication of the Phantom Helmet.

Unless medical and electronic fields both experienced significant breakthroughs simultaneously.

Liu Xiangguo knew the consequences if the Phantom was blocked here and other countries accepted it.

Rejecting new technology at their doorstep would only mean getting left behind by the world.

But Liu Xiangguo scoffed at the idea. Just with his Future Technology company alone? He had the audacity to say that his technology alone could lead the next era?

But... was that impossible?

Liu Xiangguo looked at Jiang Chen with a smile as he began to question him again.

"You're a very interesting opponent. I previously thought I had more choices to make in my next move, but it looks like that's not the case."

"Haha, not at all. I'm not here to play chess with you. I'm here to find a suitable ally worth cooperating with."

"Ally... You certainly are confident." Liu Xiangguo glared at Jiang Chen.

"Please don't underestimate the technical abilities of Future Group." Jiang Chen swirled his finger. "There's only technology you can't imagine, and there is no technology we can't make into reality."

Jiang Chen paused, smiled mysteriously, and continued.

"And when it comes to the actual ruler of Xin, I'm sure you can guess who it is."

Perhaps because it verified his prediction of Jiang Chen, Liu Xiangguo scoffed.

"Young man, you are quite devious."

"You are flattering me."

Although they were humble words, Jiang Chen's face didn't show any humility at all.

When Jiang Chen left the manor, it was already late in the night. They discussed the exact details of cooperation for a long time before finally agreeing on terms acceptable by all.

Although it was just verbal agreement.

Liu Haotian opened the car door for Jiang Chen and took a seat afterward.

"Are you pleased with the result today?"

"I'm extremely pleased. It far exceeded my expectations."

Liu Haotian glanced at Jiang Chen through the mirror, but that glimpse wasn't enough to determine if Jiang Chen's words were from the bottom of his heart. When the conversation reached the halfway point, his father eyed him to leave the room. Although he wanted to know what the terms of the deal would be between the Liu family or Hua with Future Group, his old man clearly didn't want him to know.

"That Uncle Liu is your father, right?"

"That's right. How did you know?" Liu Haotian was confused at Jiang Chen's abrupt comment.

"Isn't it obvious? Your last name is Liu." Jiang Chen rolled his eyes and answered the dumb question.

[Fair...]

Liu Haotian facepalmed in his mind.

"Just a question out of curiosity - what's Liu family's position in Hua?" Jiang Chen asked nonchalantly.

When Liu Haotian heard this question, a proud curvature appeared on his mouth.

"The leader of all the families."

When Jiang Chen returned to the hotel, it was already ten at night.

Liu Haotian parked the car without staying much longer. He simply informed Jiang Chen that he would arrive tomorrow morning at eight to drive him around.

Perhaps worried that Jiang Chen wouldn't return, Xia Shiyu stood at the front of the hotel while constantly checking the time. When Jiang Chen stepped out, she immediately came up and berated him.

"Where did you go? Why did you come back so late?"

Although her tone sounded distant, the caring expression on her face made Jiang Chen feel warm inside as he comforted her.

"Don't worry, I was discussing terms with an important person. I'll explain once we're back in the room."

"Who? Who's worried about you..." Xia Shiyu's face turned red and she looked away dishonestly. "All in all, it's late, so let's go back now."

[That's textbook coy.]

Jiang Chen watched Xia Shiyu leaving swiftly as he thought to himself.

When Jiang Chen returned to his room, he threw his suit on the side and laid on the bed with his limbs spread out.

"Ayesha."

The air beside him vibrated and her figure in a suit appeared out of thin air.

The suit consisted of special material because she mentioned to Jiang Chen that the previous black carbon Nano combat suit was too distinct, so Fallout Shelter 027 created a corresponding plan. These clothes made with special material could enter stealth mode with an optical illusion module in order to prevent the suit from being too conspicuous. In principle, the stealth clothes were designed with the same principle as gun covers.

Her blue pupils quietly looked at Jiang Chen as she waited for her master's orders.

"Are there any 'eyes' present?"

Jiang Chen referred to cameras.

"I already checked." Ayesha shook her head.

Reliable as always.

Jiang Chen patted the bed beside him.

"Come and sit beside me."

Ayesha obediently nodded and sat down.

"Are you thinking about something?"

Ayesha looked at Jiang Chen, puzzled, and her expression seemed to be asking: How did you know?

"It's written all over your face." Jiang Chen sat up and smiled while tousling her luscious hair. "Can you tell me? Maybe I can help out."

"It's not about me." The girl shook her head with her mouth slightly pouted. She dangled her legs over the bed while murmuring in a quiet voice, "What does Jiang Chen think about Sister Shiyu?"

Seeing as Jiang Chen had no response, Ayesha turned her head and looked at him, slightly embarrassed.

"My question is weird, right?"

"No, nothing weird about it." Jiang Chen recollected his thoughts. He smiled and gently squeezed her hand. "I just think it would be too selfish of me to say what's on my mind."

Ayesha shook her head rapidly and looked into his pupils tenderly. "No, it wouldn't."

"Because it is Ayesha, you won't feel like that, but other people might think otherwise."

"Master is... troubled?"

"Why did this title come up again...? Sigh. Rather than trouble, it is more not knowing what to do. Even if I can fix Xin's law to make polygamy legal, traditional culture won't change."

And because of this reason, he had been carefully watching his interpersonal relationships in the modern world. He wasn't certain

he could still maintain his relationship with Xia Shiyu if he crossed that line. Because of this, there were a few times when he was close to crossing the line before he put the brakes on himself.

Since this place was the modern world after all...

Ayesha stared at the side of Jiang Chen's face and confirmed her speculations. A faint smile surfaced on her face.

[Of course, I need to help him... Please allow your most loyal maid to be reckless for once.]

Just then, a hesitant knock came from outside the door.

The moment the door was knocked, before Jiang Chen could react, Ayesha disappeared.

"... Is he asleep already?" Low muttering came from outside as if she was debating if she should leave.

Jiang Chen wryly looked in the direction where Ayesha disappeared and walked to the door.

"Wait, I'm coming."

He opened the door as the scent of shampoo tickled his nose. Judging by the water droplets still visible around her pale neck, she probably just showered.

Xia Shiyu peeked behind Jiang Chen while pretending to be calm.
"Where did Ayesha go?"

"Why would you think Ayesha would be in my room?" Jiang Chen scratched his nose.

Although he didn't lie, he used a response that could easily be misinterpreted. He didn't know why he did that as he subconsciously hid the fact that Ayesha was there.

Perhaps it was his perception but he felt Xia Shiyu's mood becoming slightly better.

"Was there anything you wanted to talk about?"

"Didn't you say you had something to tell me?"

[Did I?]

Jiang Chen thought to himself before he suddenly realized.

He did tell her when he came back that he'd explain in the room.

Chapter 551: I'm Willing

"You can't have forgotten about it already." Xia Shiyu looked at Jiang Chen with skepticism.

"No way," Jiang Chen scratched the back of his head and stepped aside, "come in."

He poured two cups of water. When he went into the bedroom, he found Xia Shiyu sitting where Ayesha previously sat.

"Have some water."

"Mhmm, thanks." Xia Shiyu accepted the cup in Jiang Chen's hand and put her hands around it to gain some warmth.

The December in Shangjin was the middle of the frigid winter. Although there was sufficient heating in the room, she still felt chilly just coming in from outside. Jiang Chen looked around. When he saw there was no other place to sit, he sat beside her.

But just as he sat down, the unnatural feeling crept into his mind. Because he was too close, he could even sense his beating heart.

Jiang Chen inhaled in an attempt to use deep breaths to calm his unsettled heart, but the situation seemed to be evolving in the complete opposite direction as Xia Shiyu's scent floated into his nose and his unsettled heart became more anxious.

Xia Shiyu who was also timid locked her fingers around the cup and stared at the texture of the carpet; the white cloud lingering above the water hid away the anxiousness on her face.

The atmosphere in the room came to an stagnation.

Jiang Chen who realized this point scratched his face. In an attempt to break through the awkwardness, he gently coughed and said.

"Do you want to hear what happened?"

"Ah, right." Xia Shiyu blushed and coughed into her fist,

pretending to be calm.

It would perfect if she didn't bite her tongue when she spoke.

[Wait, why am I so nervous?!]

Perhaps realizing his action was unlike him, Jiang Chen mocked himself and forcefully drove out the odd throbbing in his heart and began to illustrate the conversation with Liu Xiangguo.

"So you're saying, they are willing to provide protection from the policy for our business in Hua?" Xia Shiyu put the cup on the nightstand when they began to talk about business. Her reserved state disappeared as her eyes were filled with cunning sharpness.

People say that men when serious looked charming, but Jiang Chen was surprised to discover that Xia Shiyu when serious cast an attractive vibe.

But Jiang Chen knew better than to interrupt as he nodded.

"That's right."

"What's their offer price?"

"10% of Future Group's profit in Han."

"What a big appetite. 10% of our profit. That's at least one billion USD a year. Liu Xiangguo certainly has the guts to seek bribery this openly," Xia Shiyu crossed her eyes, put her hand on her chin, and said.

Doing business anywhere had an expense in this area whether it was doing business domestically or internationally. The less elegant way to describe it was the transfer of benefits, the more elegant way was business development cost. Although Future Group's primary business was in the web field in Han with the cost lower compared to traditional interest, it is impossible to not have any expenses.

"That's the appetite of the leader of families, and they have a big family." Jiang Chen laughed, "If they really could provide enough

protection to our business, the 10% profit is not too expensive. He previously wanted 10% of global profits, but I rejected it."

Before, even if Jiang Chen had the courage, he didn't have the confidence to say no. But now the table has turned, Future International already gained its footing in the global market. While the Liu family was influential, Jiang Chen was on the same level as them.

Whether it was for the benefit of the country or for himself, there was no downside to cooperating with Future Group.

"Then, what's the method of transferring the benefits?" Xia Shiyu asked.

"Charity. I'll establish a charity under my name and inject 10% of Future Group's Han profit into the charity and hire designated cooperation to build schools and hospitals in specific areas."

"One hand taking clean money while one hand racking up the political remarks. What an efficient method." Xia Shiyu quickly understood the trick hidden inside.

"That's right." Jiang Chen snapped his finger, "looks like you figured it out now."

The tip of Xia Shiyu's mouth curled up.

"You're underestimating me. At least I'm the CEO of Future Technology."

The transfer of benefits method was unique, although as the CEO, she didn't personally conduct the bribery work, she did personally audit through every financial expense. Future Technology's grey area expense globally accounted for a positive 5%.

Although it was not something worth bragging...

"It's the CEO of Future Group." Jiang Chen corrected her.

Xia Shiyu took a second to process before she laughed.

"Right... We did make a deal."

The last time when Xia Shiyu went to Pannu Islands, Jiang Chen invited her to become the CEO of Future Group. But Xia Shiyu didn't immediately accept but agreed with Jiang Chen to accept the promotion after the Phantom's official release.

"Do you not want a promotion?"

"No," Xia Shiyu shook her head, zoned out, and stared at her fingers twirling together, "I, I just don't know if I can handle the challenge."

"Is it really okay to say this to your boss?" Jiang Chen laughed.

It was taboo to display a lack of confidence in front of a boss as an employee facing promotion. But what made Xia Shiyu herself feel odd was how easily she exposed her weak side.

Perhaps he never gave her the feeling of being a boss, but more of a... friend.

Xia Shiyu tried to convince herself in her mind.

"I trust you," Jiang Chen abruptly said.

"Eh?" Xia Shiyu looked at him, puzzled.

"Whether it is your ability or your loyalty."

"That's a weird thing to say. Is this something a boss should tell its employee?" Xia Shiyu looked away. Although she sounded calm, Jiang Chen could still hear the tantrum in her voice.

"Of course not." Jiang Chen shook his head, "If it is a regular employee, that person definitely can't take the position, and I won't tell that person this."

If it was a regular employee, then that employee won't understand his expansion thoughts, and he wouldn't trust the operation of the group to a person without a clear background. But it was different with Xia Shiyu. Disregarding everything else, she wouldn't betray him. It was not because of an irrational,

unconditional trust, but a conclusion from her personality and the complex relationship between the two.

But the words in Xia Shiyu's ear were misinterpreted to something else.

[Are you saying... I mean different things to you in your heart?]

Xia Shiyu's heart was pumping wildly.

She previously thought she would never have any girly emotions, but she was feeling the anxiousness in her mind which completely negated the belief she had held.

To be able to interpret trust as something beyond was something that only belonged to a girl in love.

"Then, Xia Shiyu, I'm going to ask you again. Are you willing to take on the role where you're the only one capable of doing so to help me achieve my dream?" Jiang Chen looked into her dark pupils and asked again sternly.

"Could you tell me what your dream is?"

"If you're willing."

"I'm willing."

There was not the slightest hesitation in her tone.

Jiang Chen opened his mouth, but that sentence didn't come out.

"Mhmm, thank you..."

There was a glimpse where he almost told her his secret.

Of course, he still couldn't trust the people of this world.

But why did he tell Ayesha? He had been puzzled by this point for a long time. Perhaps because he knew she wouldn't betray him, perhaps it was something else.

The glimpse of hesitation didn't escape Xia Shiyu's eyes. Although she felt frustrated for not gaining his trust in the last moment, when she saw the glimpse of hesitation, she felt relieved

and delighted.

At least in that instant, he felt guilty for the unequal trust.

"Then... I'll go back now." Xia Shiyu didn't force him to tell her.

"Mhmm, that's all I needed to tell you for tonight. Rest early."

"You too."

Xia Shiyu turned around, walked to the door. But the instant she put her hand on the doorknob, there was a gentle knocking sound outside.

"Is it Ayesha?" Seeing how close their relationship was, she felt a hint of jealousy.

But then, Jiang Chen instantly raised his head to the door as a chillness that he hasn't felt in a long time returned to his body.

"Don't open –"

Click—

Chapter 552: Package Bomb

"Who knows, I heard the old director personally recommended him."

"Whatever! Connections?"

"What do you think? A blank resume. I heard he did sometime near the borders and conducted B level missions, but he must be there just to obtain his qualifications... Look at the way he looks, he can be promoted like this? If it is not for his strong background, he wouldn't even pass the first level," the man lowered his voice and whispered to his colleague.

Miao Jun leaned against the concrete pillar in a grey jacket didn't bother with the conversation targeted towards him. The cigarette in his mouth only had a few sparks left. His half-narrowed eyes looked as if he was taking a nap.

Suddenly, the sparks of the cigarette illuminated brighter.

The half-narrowed eyes opened as the grey smoke came out of his nostrils.

The smell of blood...

Suddenly, a deafening explosion came from above the hotel, debris and dust scattered, flame accompanied by thick smoke sprang out of the window.

The instant explosion stunned everyone.

No one would have thought that someone had the guts to commit murder in broad daylight.

Although they were stunned, it was only for a short one second before the agents and police on scene began to move.

"This is General Staff Department Second Division Team Four. An explosion took place in Shangjin Hotel, requesting assistance now."

"Confirmed, Brigade C has surrounded the targeted area— Buzz
—"

The piercing buzzing noise almost shattered his eardrum as the commander covered his ear in agony and immediately disconnected the Bluetooth.

"Communication blocked! Fu*k, why are you standing around, go confirm the safety of the guest!"

"Roger!"

Team four was a new action team with part of its members coming from a reconnaissance background, but the team was made up criminal investigation experts who had transferred from the public police system. Many of them were masters of their field, but as elite they were they have a fatal flaw compared to the long-established groups which were their crisis response ability...

The commander stood up straight with gritted teeth. Someone forcefully connected to his Bluetooth earphone. It was not simple communication blocking anymore, it was the more sophisticated communication hijacking.

Just as all the bodyguards were running upstairs, he suddenly noticed a member that didn't seem to fit the team had disappeared.

...

How long since he's had this feeling?

The omen of death that crept into his mind and "Fury's" danger perception awakened at the same time.

The heavy gust of wind blew apart the thick smoke, behind the Nitrogen Armor was a face covered in gloom.

Jiang Chen scanned his surroundings. The entire room was destroyed, and the only thing left standing was half of the bed he sat on.

Inside the washroom, Xia Shiyu, who was curled up, slowly

opened her eyes. After she confirmed the fact that she was still alive, she looked bewilderedly at the person that carried her around the waist.

In a black suit; that serene figure. The person that carried her into the washroom, was her "enemy"...

Ayesha.

She couldn't think right now as to why Ayesha would suddenly appear in Jiang Chen's room, why she would suddenly save her from the center of the explosion. Because what just occurred was too traumatizing, she couldn't think straight. But the unpleasant memory of her being kidnapped once again surfaced in her head...

She wanted to scream. Her mouth was open, but she couldn't make a sound.

Just a few seconds ago, Jiang Chen attempted to stop her from opening the door, but the person appeared was a man in custodian uniform.

There was a paper box in his hand. The innocent face was hard to connect with danger, but the fervor in his eyes was terrifying.

Without time to alert Xia Shiyu, he ripped off the tape on the paper box between his arms.

Almost instantaneously, Ayesha who realized the oddity of the situation immediately stopped the optical illusion and lifted Xia Shiyu around the waist into the washroom in the hallway around the corner to avoid the flame that instantly engulfed the room. Jiang Chen who had the ominous feel took out the Nitrogen Armor to blow away the explosive shockwave.

He threw the Nitrogen Armor back into the storage dimension and sat up from the bed that had been blown in half and patted away the dust on his shoulder. He was relieved seeing the hallway in mayhem but without blood.

Fortunately, Ayesha never left the room from start to finish, or

Xia Shiyu would not have survived in the explosion.

When he thought about the explosion almost hurting the person dear to him, Jiang Chen was furious. He swore that regardless who planned this attack, he will make that person pay.

"Ayesha."

"Yes."

"They should not be operating alone. There should be accomplices nearby... Find them."

Jiang Chen did not believe that a person's effort alone could sneak into the foreign delegate hotel under several layers of protection.

"Yes."

Ayesha gently put Xia Shiyu on the ground and smiled at her who was still recovering from the blast. She then opened the optical illusion and disappeared in the room.

Xia Shiyu stared at the unfathomable scene that had just happened in front of her as she murmured blankly.

"Dis...disappeared..."

Jiang Chen kneeled down beside Xia Shiyu and looked at her apologetically.

"I'm sorry that you encountered this... The enemy is clearing targeting me. You've seen that Future Group has a lot of enemies, and among them are people who are willing to use extreme methods. If you're scared..."

Xia Shiyu who recollected her thought shook her head rapidly and tried to be brave.

"Do you think I'm a scaredy-cat?"

Jiang Chen took a second to process before he started laughing.

"Don't force yourself to be brave. You're so scared."

Jiang Chen reached out to Xia Shiyu who was shaking.

Xia Shiyu rolled her eyes at Jiang Chen and grabbed onto his hand with force before getting up from the ground.

Sirens broadcasted loudly outside of the window before the sound of cluttered footsteps came from outside. Several bodyguards and special forces with pistols entered the room and bumped into Jiang Chen and Xia Shiyu walking out from the washroom.

When they saw them, the commander Cheng Hu forced his way to the front and looked anxiously at Jiang Chen.

"Are you okay?"

"Just like what you saw, we happened to be in the washroom, so luckily survived."

When Xia Shiyu heard Jiang Chen's description, her cold and elegant face was covered by a red hue. The way he said it was easy for other people to misinterpret. For example what reason would make the two "coincidentally" stay in the washroom together?

But she was clearing overthinking, no one thought that way.

The foreign delegation was the target of a suicidal terrorist attack, it would be a global scandal if released! Everyone here focused on the actual attack.

Cheng Hu took a deep breath, lowered his head, and said.

"I apologize for you encountering such a dangerous event. We'll do our absolute best to find the perpetrator behind this attack and give you an answer!"

"That would be great." Jiang Chen nodded expressionlessly.

The manager of the hotel arranged a new room for Jiang Chen and began the follow-up procedures.

When Jiang Chen left the original room, Cheng Hu immediately ordered security and agents to conduct a carpet search in the room

while interrogating all hotel workers separately. Just as he swore he would flip the hotel upside down, a black shadow appeared.

At the same time, two sets of eyes spotted him.

Chapter 553: Not Died

Sirens reverberated on the streets as the red and blue lights decorated the night of the city. Within the shadow behind the illumination of prosperity, a black shadow traversed quickly among the ally as dark as a black hole. But behind that shadow, the grey jacket flew with the wind and the agent of the General Staff Department tightly pursued.

With pistol tightly clenched in his hand, Miao Jun's eyes locked onto that figure while he adjusted his breathing. The enemy's speed was too fast to give him the time to report his coordinate. But it was okay, the phone in his pocket was on. As long as he managed to keep up with the person, it will only take time before backup arrives and captures this person.

But the person's endurance was unbelievable which made Miao Jun more shocked the longer he chased. He was considered top quartile in the General Staff Department, but having chased for so long, the person running in the front didn't seem to be losing his pace while he was beginning to lose his breath.

If this continued, he will lose him.

With the criticality of the situation, he could no longer follow the rules and procedures.

Miao Jun used his finger to flip open the safety. When he passed through a 90 degrees turn, he immediately raised his gun and fired.

Three gunshots echoed in the small ally. He clearly felt one of the bullets hit that person on the back.

The black shadow tumbled when being shot before turning to a dead end on the side.

Miao Jun immediately followed and turned into the dead end. He aimed his muzzle at the wounded person and shouted.

"Don't move! You're under arrest."

Maybe it was because he heard Miao Jun's shout, the person with his back hunched had his back exposed to Miao Jun without any movement. But the menacing laugh that drifted from underneath the black coat made Miao Jun feel a daunting chillness.

With cold sweat rolling down from his forehead and swallowing the natural fear he felt along with his saliva, Miao Jun moved closed while holding the pistol up.

But as he was 10 minutes away from the person, he stopped.

Under the pristine moonlight, he didn't notice any blood from the wound on his back.

"Oh? Mr. Police, why are you not approaching closer?"

The spark of firing flashed in the dark alley as the bullet only penetrated the shadow of the pitch black figure. The safe distance of ten meters was instantly shortened to an extreme, and the glaring white blade stabbed toward Miao Jun fiercely.

The crisp sound of metal contacting each other reverberated in the alley as the colliding blades even created sparks.

Miao Jun suppressed the sharp pain on his hand while feeling more stunned. The person's close combat ability was without a doubt above his, and the decision to approach him was the wrong choice.

Seeing the agent from the General Staff Department start to riposte less and less, a menacing smile surfaced on the person's face.

"Die, before dawn."

While he spoke those words with unclear meaning, another white blade slashed out from underneath the shadow. With his dagger being guarded down, Miao Jun's pupils narrowed and watched the sharp blade stab to his shoulder.

Bang!

Blood splattered, a knife slipped out, and the person tumbled back and fell down.

The blade aimed at Miao Jun's chest only made a cut on his side. Although it caused a large amount of bleeding, it didn't do any critical damage. The bullet from out of nowhere saved his life.

Without a doubt, it was a sniper rifle!

Miao Jun covering his wound fell down beside a garbage can in the ally as he used his trance sight to witness an obscure scene.

The person that was hit by sniper rifle climbed up from the ground with difficulty as blood pooled on the ground.

It was the first time he saw someone being able to stand after being hit by a sniper rifle.

On the roof of a building one thousand meters out, Ayesha, lying on the ground locked, onto the street through the crosshair. Although because of obstructions, she couldn't continue to aim at that person. But from the tumbling figure, that person didn't die.

"Target hit... kill unconfirmed."

Being able to survive a direct hit to the chest by a Ghost Sniper? When she witnessed this odd scene, she instinctively sensed something obscure about that person.

Currently, Jiang Chen, who was in the washroom, concerned. After the attack, when he finished dealing with the security asking him questions, he made the excuse to go into the washroom.

"Unable to kill?"

"Yes. It is confirmed the bullet directly penetrated the target's body, but the target's life information didn't disappear... Target is on the move."

"Capture him before the General Staff Department captures him," Jiang Chen said in a low voice.

"Roger." Ayesha took a deep breath and stood up.

"Wait, get the Ghost Agent to do it, you come back."

As Jiang Chen's assistant, disappearing too long would cause unnecessary suspicion. After the attack occurred, Jiang Chen came in contact with the Ghost Agent hidden in Shangjin. Based on the location reported by Ayesha, the Ghost Agent should have arrived at the target's area.

With the tracking of the Hummingbird drones, the accomplice of that assassin will not be able to escape from the eyes of the Ghost Agent.

Jiang Chen was more concerned about how he survived after being penetrated. He also needed to capture the person alive to figure out who planned this attack.

After hanging up the phone, Jiang Chen sat up from the toilet. He already spent long enough in the washroom, and there were still people and things for him to deal with. With such an incident occurring in the hotel the delegation stayed in, it was a question if this delegation visit should continue or not.

The custodian was murdered, the security personnel in the hallway was killed, attacked with a bomb by knocking on the door of the business representative from Xin.

He was not the only person that stayed here. Other Xin businessmen also lived here. It was tough to hide such a serious incident. A lot of people were awakened by the loud explosion from their dreams and began to inquire about what happened. Zhang Yapin was negotiating with Han diplomats and urged the local police to punish the attacker...

That is if they manage to catch the attacker.

As Jiang Chen expected, the moment he left the washroom, a few officials who clearly just rolled out of bed stood in front of him and began to ask him about the detail of the attack. They then

promised him pumping their chest to use the entire city's police force to capture the attacker to give him an answer.

Then, it was Liu Haotian, who didn't leave for a long time, who found Jiang Chen. Although he was only a concierge of the Concierge Department, from other officials' respectful look, Liu family's political influence in Han's political scene was indeed powerful.

"Did you get injured?"

"I was quite lucky, I was in the washroom when the explosion happened."

Without seeing the aftershock of just surviving through a horrific incident, Liu Haotian examined him with a perplexed expression.

"I'm reassured after confirming you're okay. If you need anything, call me."

"I don't need anything, I just want you to give me an explanation." Jiang Chen looked straight into Liu Haotian's eyes and said directly.

"The attack may be planned by foreign forces with an attempt to disrupt the two countries—"

"I don't want to hear the diplomatic stuff. You can say this on the news."

"Then you're suggesting?" Liu Haotian furrowed his eyebrows as Jiang Chen pressed him further.

Jiang Chen smiled, and then lowered his voice.

"Xin can keep this incident confidential."

Liu Haotian was surprised and cautiously looked at him.

"Your terms are?"

"No terms at all." Jiang Chen opened his hands. "We all want this visit to run smooth, don't we?"

Chapter 554: A High-profile Business Conference

Although Jiang Chen didn't bring up any terms, Liu Haotian still expressed that the Liu family owed him a favor and they will repay the favor.

But Jiang Chen completely didn't let Liu Haotian's promise get to his head. The emperor's family was the most ruthless; a favor was just a joke when dealing with such powerful families. He already saw this too clearly when he was in Wanghai. Which kind of favor was more than the favor of saving a life? If saving a life was not enough in exchange for protection, what could this small favor do?

It was interests that bind the two parties together, not something that needs to be maintained by favors.

After Liu Haotian left, Jiang Chen spoke with Zhang Yapin who just finished discussing with Han's diplomats and told him to cooperate with Han to cover up this attack and cover up the emotions of the investors.

The light of the explosion could not be covered up as a lot of people nearby captured the thick smoke that sprang out from the windows. But the nature of the incident was reclassified from an attack to a leaking natural gas pipeline. The contract worker responsible for maintenance had been let go. The explosion occurred in a room without anyone inside, while the delegation was startled, there was no injury. For the friendship of the two countries, Xin's President Zhang Yapin accepted the apology from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Hotel to put a conclusion on the "accident".

When the reporters were permitted to enter the scene, the room Jiang Chen lived in was changed into a different room. People who knew the truth were instructed to shut their mouths, and the truth behind the incident had sunk to the bottom of the sea. Even then,

whether it was the Ghost Agent or the General Staff Department, they didn't stop pursuing the accomplice of the attacker.

Needless to say, that person was an escape artist as he managed to escape from the layers of surrounding security set up by the General Staff Department. It could be clearly seen that they prepared a sophisticated plan for this assassination. Not only did they know the city of Shangjin well, but they also prepared transportation vehicles and disguises along the way.

When he sat onto the secondhand pick-up truck, put on makeup to transform into a middle-aged bald man, wore T-shirt and jeans with the colors fading due to too many washes, the tall build killer completely changed into an old driver responsible for long distance logistics.

As to how Jiang Chen knew everything clearly, it was because he didn't manage to escape being locked on by Sky Eye X1 satellite.

Just as he was about to leave Shangjin through the rural area, the Ghost Agent that followed up began to close the net and captured him at a gas station. Then covered with optical illusion clothes, the Ghost Agent kidnapped the attacker onto a vessel to Xin.

By noon of the second day, the agents of the General Staff Department were still working hard to search for the accomplice, but Jiang Chen already received the confirmation he was imprisoned at New Moon Island.

"... We found something odd on his body."

Currently, in the restaurant of the hotel, Jiang Chen sat with Ayesha together, enjoying lunch while discussing the information sent by the Ghost Agent.

"Odd?" Jiang Chen's chopsticks froze midair and looked at Ayesha with eyes of inquiry.

"That's right, his regeneration ability is especially strong to the point that it's unimaginable. Any non-fatal wound could recover in

an extremely short period of time. When Zhu Yu captured him, she thought she got the wrong person because there was no gun wound on his chest... But during the interrogation on New Moon Island, we discovered his implausible regeneration ability." With a voice only Jiang Chen could hear, Ayesha spoke.

"Increase regeneration ability... Wait, interrogation?" Jiang Chen looked shockingly at Ayesha.

Ayesha nodded gravely.

"That's right; the truth-telling liquid is ineffective against him."

...

Jiang Chen's pupils contracted.

[The truth-telling liquid is ineffective? That's impossible. Based on what Sun Jiao said, other than people injected with Genetic Vaccine, a serum that increased immunity or with the rare Nano blood could resist against the hallucinating agent, and these absolutely would not exist in the modern world!

Could he be a traveler like me?!]

The idea abruptly popped up in Jiang Chen's head, and he quickly negated it himself. If it were really a traveler, the weapon he used would not be explosives with no technical expertise, at least it would be a Nuclear Grenade.

"Increase the amount of truth-telling liquid used... If he is absolutely immune to that, use physical methods to interrogate him. We have to get the information from his mouth regardless of the method. But don't kill him, I still have uses for him."

Jiang Chen closed his eyes and ordered.

Ayesha nodded and remembered his words in her heart.

...

Based on the agenda, this afternoon would be one of the primary purposes of this trip – the Han Economic and Trade Cooperation

Business Forum. The Internet giants of Han will be gathered with BAT at the scene, Internet and VR industry cooperation will be the emphasis of the business talks between the enterprises of the two countries.

Although on paper it was the business talks between the enterprises of the two countries, everyone knew it was the discussion between Future Technology and the BAT giants. The only large tech company in Xin was Future Technology, and the only tech companies with the ability to capture the VR market were the three massive players. Although there were quite a few tech companies such as SoMao or 361, they were still far away from dictating the market like the three giants.

The Business Forum took place in Shangjin Restaurant.

When Jiang Chen arrived at the place with Liu Haotian, it was exactly 2:30 and ten minutes away from the start of the forum. But with how full the parking lot was, most of the representatives attending the forum have already shown up.

Indeed, when Jiang Chen stepped into the conference room at the end of the hall, all the eyes turned toward him. Other than the president of the three BAT giants, the people sitting here were all leaders of the tech industry as well as renowned reporters who stood beside the wall.

Even then, he still only recognized two of them.

And the embarrassing thing was, he knew them because of the stickers...

Jiang Chen quietly sat down at the only open seat and couldn't look to the Ma bosses smiling at him.

"Ahem," Seeing everyone arrived, the man who sat at the end of the table stood up. He used an authoritative but gentle gaze to scan around the room, "Although there is still 10 minutes before the start of the conference, everyone here is passionate about the

cooperation between the two countries. Since everyone is here, let's start then!"

A round of applause rang in the conference room. Jiang Chen's eyes stopped at the man standing as he clapped with the crowd. From his impression, the person speaking must be the Minister of Economics and Trade Cooperation.

Confirming Jiang Chen's speculation, the man with a smile raised his hand.

"Let me introduce myself. I'm Pan Feng, the Minister of Economics and Trade Cooperation. The tech industry is a booming industry and an area the country places a great deal of emphasis on! Everyone here is leaders of the tech field. As a person who ran a steel plant before. Who know nothing of the industry, I won't interrupt and leave the time to all of you. Talk, discuss, communicate, if you can reach an agreement, it would be beneficial for the citizens of both countries! Now, let's introduce the President of Baidu, Li Yanhong to deliver a speech."

With applause, the man with gelled hair stood up.

"Thank you, Minister Pan, for your introduction, I will say a few words then..."

Li Yanhong was indeed worthy as the company's President, he had an in-depth understanding of the Internet's prospects and an understanding of key points. Although it was a casual speech, it offered many of unique insights which even made Jiang Chen as someone who didn't know too much about it agree.

At the same time, Jiang Chen also noted that many of the Presidents took out a small notebook and carefully wrote down notes.

After all, it was the President of Baidu that spoke. Baidu is the benchmark in the tech industry and any of their moves would cause a small earthquake in the field.

About ten minutes, during a round of applause, Li Yanhong ended his speech and nodded to the applauding crowd with a smile.

Just as Jiang Chen thought the two Ma Bosses would talk together, Li Yanhong looked to his direction and continued.

"The point of view of the future of the Internet is just my own opinion. In this regard, I believe that the Wall Street praised Future Group President, Mr. Jiang Chen, must have a more iconic view on the future of the Internet, I hope Mr. Jiang Chen won't be stingy and deliver his opinion."

Chapter 555: Who is the Monopoly?

Inside the conference room, all eyes once again zoomed onto Jiang Chen. Jiang Chen sensed the discontent in Li Yanhong's eyes and immediately understood his intention.

Not only industry leaders and officials were inside the conference room, but the reporters with cameras were also all waiting for him to speak. If he backed down now, it would make Future Technology look inferior compared to Baidu.

As the President of Future Group, Jiang Chen would not allow such an event to occur. Although he didn't prepare a script about the Future of the Internet, after a short deliberation, he still stood up with a smile.

Because he didn't know the most appropriate introduction, Jiang Chen cleared his throat first and organized his thoughts in his head.

When they heard the two light coughs, the bosses of the tech companies he couldn't distinguish and even the two Ma bosses took out their notebooks.

Jiang Chen saw this scene as he facepalmed in his mind.

[Is this necessary? I just coughed.]

"Then, since Mr. Li invited me to talk, I will say a few things."

"I will talk only about one point about the future of the Internet," with a pause, Jiang Chen raised one finger, "innovation."

The sound of notes shuffling filled the conference room which made Jiang Chen proud but embarrassed at the same time. What made him proud was that the once unreachable tech giants were all listening to his opinion like students. What made him embarrassed was that the point he was going to deliver was made up on the spot.

"From P2P to O2O, Internet has penetrated every field of our lives. On the surface, it is the shift of societal norms, but ultimately, its birth originates from innovation. And what's the motive behind innovation?"

Jiang Chen scanned the tech giants around the table with a curvature appearing on his mouth when he saw how they were all concentrating on him. He then raised a second finger.

"It is technology."

"The birth of any new technology meant the birth of a new market. Such as the technology of Future 1.0 where the increased hardware efficiency enabled the creation of apps with high hardware demand. For example, the virtual reality technology that will open the door to the virtual world. I'm not here to brag about Future Technology's technical advancement but simply illustrating a fact. It is undeniable that there are other factors important for a company. But what I want to say is what determined Future Technology and to an extend Future Group's current market position is neither marketing means nor business relationships, it is technology..."

Jiang Chen just wanted to say a few words, but since he started to talk, fifteen minutes passed in a blink of an eye. Jiang Chen didn't explain any difficult concepts but only focused on how Future Technology grew from a company with an initial capital of half a million to a money printing machine valued over hundreds of billions by Wall Street in such a short period of time.

Perhaps Jiang Chen's words inspired the audience, or perhaps humans naturally lacked immunity to success stories.

The audience was drawn to and intoxicated by the speech.

When his speech ended, the room was blown away by thunderous applause!

Jiang Chen sat down and smiled at Li Yanhong. However, what

surprised Jiang Chen was he didn't see any disappointment on his face, but rather a grin that resembled his success?

The applauses gradually stopped, and Li Yanhong stood up again and looked at Jiang Chen with a smile.

"Remarkable speech. I personally agree with your perspective," Boss Li paused, and then looked at the media around the conference room and continued to display his standard smile, "Technology is the stairs to human advancement, and because of technology, our future can be better. As the President of an Internet company, I think the spirit of the Internet is sharing. Then Mr. Jiang Chen, are you willing to make open the virtual reality technology to Han enterprises with the belief of sharing and improving together, so your home country can become a major tech power in the world?"

The atmosphere in the conference room instantly quieted down.

Minister Pan Feng looked at Li Yanhong, surprised, but the tech leaders and reporters all looked at Jiang Chen, hopeful. Ma Huateng nonchalantly peered at Jiang Chen and Li Yanhong without saying a word. He didn't know the motive behind Baidu's move.

At the focus of thousands of eyes, Jiang Chen slowly said.

"With all respect due, Mr. Lee calls using the generosity of other people as sharing?"

Li Yanhong clearly took a moment to process as he didn't expect Jiang Chen would say this, but he soon reacted, "Of course not, you must have misinterpreted what I meant. I'm talking about you registering your patent. Exchanging protection with making the technology available, and charging a patent fee to companies that use the technology. Therefore, it not only ensures the interest of your company, but it also benefits Han tech companies by allowing them to enter the virtual reality market fairly. What's stopping you?"

The two speeches slapped two accusations on Jiang Chen. One was generosity, one was patriotism. If refused, that meant he would have to accept the two accusations. The two were completely unrelated but connected together by nonexistent logic. It was similar to the common phrases on the web "If you're so rich, why don't you go donate?", "If you don't agree, you're not Han." The two sentences were extremely similar.

If you have the technology that leads the world, why don't you share with us?

"I refuse."

Li Yanhong was stunned, so were the presidents at the conference and the reporters on the side. Although they didn't believe Jiang Chen would give up his technology with just a few words, they didn't expect Jiang Chen to outright reject without using any words to subtly express the idea.

"This is a monopoly; unjust usage of market dominance to hinder technical advancement. Are you sure you want to do that?" Li Yanhong said.

Jiang Chen suddenly burst out laughing.

"Monopoly? Unjust usage of market dominance? Are you really the right person to say this? Mr. Li."

"Why can't I say this?" A hint of infuriation flashed across Li Yanhong's eyes but his expression was still normal, "Do you not allow people to speak if you did something wrong—"

"The buying and selling for forums, manipulating search rankings, publishing fake medial ads, violating publishing rights, censoring searches because a site owner criticized you on Weibo... Is this what you refer to as maintaining market order? Haha, I won't say anything else. Please tell me, Mr. Li. The same thing, do you dare to do it in your own country? Mr. Li with a green card, do you dare to answer my question?"

Jiang Chen stared straight into Li Yanhong's eyes as he stated word by word.

The scandals were suddenly brought onto the table, Li Yanhong who had control of the situation suddenly looked mortified.

"Please watch your usage of words. If there is an inaccuracy in reporting, you will have to take responsibility!"

"Then please provide facts to rebuttal me."

"There is no need for a rebuttal! All the activities of our company are legal. We are currently not in any major lawsuits!" Li Yanhong skipped through the green card point. He had been carefully hiding this, although it was not a secret in the industry, it was still bad if it caught the public's attention.

Jiang Chen suddenly started laughing again, but his laughter this time was more cheerful.

"What are you laughing at!" Li Yanhong's face turned red as he said in embarrassment.

"This has to do with another joke, but it would be inappropriate to say, so I won't speak more." Jiang Chen nodded at Pan Feng, the latter looked away, and then he gazed at Li Yanhong again, "All Future Technology's technologies are independently researched and developed. Our technologies are considered corporate secrets and are within the boundary of law. The monopoly you're referring to, I want to ask, what's your definition of a monopoly, is Baidu considered a monopoly?"

"The definition of a monopoly? Mr. Jiang with such a big company should learn some law. The definition of a monopoly is dependent on the size of the market. And us, we are definitely not a monopoly. There is more than one company doing search engine. I can do it, and you definitely can do it. I didn't use my market position to prevent anyone from doing so. We just use our strong user stickiness and use users' trust to obtain our current day

market position." Mr. Li argued.

"Then did I use Future Technology's market position to prevent you from designing, researching, and selling virtual reality products?" Jiang Chen asked with curiosity as his fingers crossed over his knee. "I know you have been acquiring controlling stakes in VR companies domestically, preparing to create both hardware and content, and then pushing out entertainment straight out of your brand with your own VR products. I know all of that, but because of your inferior technology, you're are accusing us of creating a monopoly and disrupting the market. You depend on user's stickiness, and we depend on technology and user experience, can you say you're more righteous?"

"You!" Li Hongyan's face was completely bloated as he couldn't think of a rebuttal due to his lack of words.

"Monopoly is a concept that all major international companies are associated with. Some companies achieve monopoly through advanced technology, some companies achieve monopoly through the operating philosophy that 'customer is God', some use their unique and irreplaceable nature. Though regardless, they achieved a monopoly through market competition. Let's not talk about me. Let's talk about you. Mr. Li, do you dare to say that you achieved a monopoly through market competition with your conscience? Is Baidu's monopoly really positive to the market?"

Li Hongyan's face turned as red as a pig liver's due to Jiang Chen's words making him speechless without defense. Boss Ma wanted to help him out, but when he scanned the reporters on the side, he swallowed the words that came up to his throat.

Pan Feng who sat at the head of the table could no longer watch this as he awkwardly coughed.

"Please sit down, we're here to seek cooperation and not search for divergence. Baidu wanting Future Technology to provide virtual reality technology is not wrong from their perspective.

Future Technology refusing Baidu's proposition is not wrong either. I hope the rest of the discussion can take place in a friendly atmosphere. Media, please don't dwell on this topic." Pan Feng scanned the reporters in the conference room with a stern look.

The previously lively atmosphere became awkward after being disrupted by their standoff.

Ma Huateng stood up, coughed, and prepared to play the role of the middleman, "Then, the forum will continue—"

"I just want to say one thing about virtual reality cooperation." Jiang Chen stood up, interrupted Boss Ma, and looked expressionlessly at the livid Li Yanhong."I welcome partners. For unreasonable people, please excuse yourself."

Then, Jiang Chen turned around and left the room with no regard to the shocked tech giants and reporters.

Chapter 556: A Strong Stance

An early exit?

Everyone was shocked; they still hadn't recovered from Jiang Chen's speech and his authoritative exit.

It wasn't an internal meeting of a corporation but a business forum that was connected to the economic cooperation of two countries! The Hua-Xin forum wasn't only comprised of individuals from the tech field, but everyone knew the tech field was the focus of this business forum.

While Li Yanhong's aggressive comment seemed to be at fault first, was Jiang Chen's reaction too excessive? This "immature" action in this kind of setting didn't suit his position as the President of a multi-national company. His temper belonged to a reckless man, not a shrewd businessman seeking a partnership opportunity...

Was Jiang Chen being immature?

Yesterday, he and Liu Xiangguo discussed this question during their conversation.

"During tomorrow's business forum, keep an eye on Li Yanhong."

"Li Yanhong? If I remember correctly, he's the boss of Baidu. Is there a problem with him?"

"No problem. Baidu is always a politically correct company with firm support." Liu Xiangguo sipped on his tea and narrowed his eyes sluggishly. "But because of this, he won't be friendly to you."

"Could you elaborate on this?"

"With your deviousness, you know exactly what I mean." Liu Xiangguo put down his teacup.

"Deviousness? If possible, I hope you can use a different descriptive word," Jiang Chen said wryly.

"Young man, there aren't a lot of people who could be called devious by me." The elder paused, and opened his wrinkled eyelids slightly. "To put it simply, the people at the top have divergent opinions about you."

"Please explain," Jiang Chen humbly said.

Perhaps it was because they already formed an alliance, but Liu Xiangguo didn't keep anything hidden from him. "Some people think Future Group's technology should be owned by the country since artificial intelligence, virtual reality, nutrient supply, and deep water mining are all beneficial to both the country and its people."

Jiang Chen didn't feel too shocked when he heard Liu Xiangguo's words. Although Hua didn't express any official opinion on this matter, he doubted they knew nothing about Future Group.

"If you're interested in nutrient supply, we can work together but deep water mining is a bit difficult. We already signed a technology non-proliferation agreement with BHP. It would be risky for us to engage in direct conflict with an international mining giant."

Deepwater mining would probably be the most attractive to Hua and its appeal should be even greater compared to virtual reality technology since this technology could strengthen sovereignty over the ocean while virtual reality's military applications were far less appealing compared to commercial usage.

But Liu Xiangguo didn't seem to be too hooked on this point. He glared at Jiang Chen before continuing.

"Another group of people thinks this is like killing the chicken for the egg and being over-possessive. If Linhua Group didn't use unlawful methods or use the power of SASAC to cut Future Technology's options, perhaps you wouldn't be forced away."

"I don't disagree." Jiang Chen nodded.

Just as he said, if it wasn't for the Wang family's hideous

intentions, he wouldn't have left. But on the other hand, Future Group started its expansion after it stepped out of restrictive boundaries to grow to its size today.

"The Wanghai Wang family you are familiar with belongs in the first group, and the supporter behind Li Yanhong also happens to be in that group. During the business forum, he will use the opportunity to make trouble for you."

"What will he do?" Jiang Chen asked.

"He won't do anything out of the line - he'll ask you questions that put you on the spot and test your bottom line at most. What you need to be is authoritative," Liu Xiangguo said without much emotion in his voice.

"Authoritative? I understand."

While the Liu family was the leader of families, the politics of the republic wasn't controlled by the red nobles. Although the Liu family was willing to act as the protective umbrella of Future Group, Liu Xiangguo couldn't neglect the opinions of his colleagues whose positions were no lower than his.

He needed an opportunity, and this opportunity had to be provided by Jiang Chen by acting with force during the business forum.

The premise was that the people who viewed Future Group as an outsider weren't repulsed by Future Group's technology. Future Technology was different from Google. Baidu copied Google's technology, so the departure of the disobedient Google had no influence on Hua, but Future Technology was different - its technology was irreplaceable.

Because of this, as long as it was within an appropriate range, the more authoritative Jiang Chen acted, the easier it would be for the Liu family to negotiate with their colleagues.

Even without considering virtual reality technology, with the

tension in the area continuing to escalate, Hua wouldn't want to push too hard on a dictator worth cooperating with. Just on this point alone, the people at the top reached a consensus.

Seeing Jiang Chen reached this "understanding," Liu Xiangguo nodded with satisfaction and joking said:

"I have a stronger confidence in you now. Why don't I introduce my niece to you?"

"Umm... I'll pass. I already have too much to handle." Jiang Chen touched his nose with a troubled smile.

Seeing Jiang Chen's rejection, although Liu Xiangguo didn't look too pleased, he didn't say anymore and just mocked him with a cold face.

"Young man, you should take care of your body so you don't regret it when you're older."

Jiang Chen only shrugged at the elder's mocking words.

"I'll be careful."

As if Liu Haotian had guessed Jiang Chen would leave early, he was already waiting by the stairs when Jiang Chen stepped out.

"Done already?"

"Conversation didn't take off. Let's go. Before we go back to the hotel, I need you to take me somewhere." Jiang Chen left him hanging and walked directly to the parking lot.

"Clubs? I know a couple of fun places, but it isn't dark yet. Is that okay?"

"Get out!" Jiang Chen jokingly cursed.

Jiang Chen didn't expect any specific agreements to be made during the business forum. He already delivered the message he needed to get across, so leaving early made no difference. The trouble was, his actions might be criticized. But the reason he did it could be attributed to the ill-intentions of Baidu.

Just for the sake of billions of USD per year, the Liu family would wipe his butt clean for him, so there was no need for him to worry about this.

"I guess when you left, Li Yanhong's expression must've been hilarious." Liu Haotian joked with Jiang Chen after he sat in the car.

"Pan Feng's expression was even more hilarious, but is it bad if I left a bad impression on him?"

"Don't worry. Although he's at a ministry level, he doesn't have any real control. In terms of political stance, he belongs in the middle that doesn't cause any trouble. You should be more worried about Baidu - perhaps he'll take you down from his search engine," Liu Haotian joked.

"Only if he's willing to see all phones installed with Future 1.0, unable to use Baidu to search." Jiang Chen sank in his seat, unafraid.

The car didn't drive for even two kilometers before Jiang Chen received a phone call from Ali that expressed their intentions to cooperate in a virtual reality online retailer.

Just as he expected, even if the business forum didn't end on a good note, Future Technology's appeal was enough for him to not worry about the lack of interest. Not only Ali, but Penguin and the proud Baidu from the business forum subsequently called him.

For his potential partners or competitors, Jiang Chen didn't immediately promise anything. Instead, he suggested that only once Future Technology's newly appointed CEO came into office would he discuss cooperation.

Jiang Chen's words stunned the representatives who called.

There's going to be a new CEO for Future Technology?

This was an incredible piece of news.

Just when everyone was speculating who the new CEO would be, inside a coffee shop, Jiang Chen met with the next CEO of Future Technology recommended by Xia Shiyu.

He had already met this person a couple times.

Chapter 557: New CEO

In an old and low residential building in the rural area of Wanghai City, a Caucasian male in a grey jacket leaned against the radiator. His eyes were closed with a pleasant expression.

"I like this country. Whether it's the wealthy or poor, they can all enjoy warmth equally in the chilly winter."

"Giles, are you telling me you've been zoning out?" The man sitting by the window looked to this side with a gloomy expression.

The man referred to as Giles smiled. "What else? My dear Ladisiv, you should learn to enjoy your current life."

Ladisiv's face was still gloomy. He continued to stare at the grinning Giles for a long time before looking away.

Suddenly, there was a knock at the door.

They looked at each other and exchanged eye contact then Ladisiv put his hand on his waist while moving toward the door.

After confirming the identity of the person at the door, Ladisiv was relieved and opened the heavy door.

A man wearing a hat entered the room along with a gust of wind. He closed the door behind him and shook the snow off his body before dragging his feet into the living room.

"What's the situation?" Ladisiv asked in an undertone.

"Mission failed," the man replied with broken English. He took off his jacket and threw it on the sofa.

"That's unfortunate... Where's our Mr. Warrior?" Giles asked.

"Hirata was captured and mostly transported out of the country by Future Group."

"Professor won't be happy." Ladisiv's face grew even more gloomy because that meant he just kissed his bonus goodbye.

In contrast to the fanatic "alien hobbyist," he didn't care about the hidden conflict between the company and Willie Society led by the Rothschild family, nor did he care about "Burakkuboto" or the "Golden Apple." As a mercenary, he only cared about money.

"The professor won't be happy... or he could feel otherwise."

"Oh?" Giles looked at the man in surprise.

"Because I saw something interesting." The man laughed lightly, took off the hat on his head, and put it on the hanger by the wall. "Perhaps our enemy isn't only a pawn of Willie Society."

If Xia Shiyu was here, she would be shocked.

Because the face under the hat belonged to the suicide attacker who should've been blown to pieces.

He should've been dead.

...

Because of what happened last night, the higher-ups increased the security level of Jiang Chen by two. Although his driver was still Liu Haotian, Jiang Chen could clearly sense that there wasn't only one car following his Hongqi L9.

The number of police vehicles on the street increased exponentially. The higher-ups were fuming at the explosion that occurred at the hotel and held countless people in charge responsible for this incident.

Inside a coffee shop, Jiang Chen met the newly appointed CEO.

It was Ning Huajian, the previous project manager for Future 1.0 and one of the founding employees of Future Technology. He had a technical background and a meticulous personality. He valued directions from his superior more than his own thoughts. Because he previously worked on the core project Future 1.0, his familiarity with Future Technology was only second to Xia Shiyu. With him appointed as the new CEO, he could take over the operations of the

company while lessening the impact of changing the CEO.

Jiang Chen saw some luggage beside his feet. He must've just arrived in Shangjin without time to head to his hotel.

"I believe you have seen the email regarding the job change. You'll be the CEO of Future Technology and the General Manager of the Hua area, responsible for the most important subsidiary of Future Group. You'll have to take the burden now, and I hope you won't disappoint my expectations," Jiang Chen said seriously to Ning Huajian, who carried a hint of weariness from travel.

"Please be assured, President, I won't disappoint you." Ning Jianhua raised his chest. Because of excitement, his voice started to tremble.

His efforts towards Future Technology could be described as hard-working and outstanding, but he never thought he would become CEO of the company since CEO Xia's competency and ethics were impeccable, she was one of the founders of the company, and had an "inexplicable" relationship with the President.

But now, the sudden change made everything a reality. With Xia Shiyu appointed as CEO of the Group, her vacant position was going to be taken over by project manager Ning Jianhua.

After he received the email in the morning, he boarded a plane at noon to Shangjin without hesitation and walked out of the airport by the afternoon.

Jiang Chen nodded at Ning Jianhua, who was full of passion, and placed a contract in front of him.

"This is your new contract. Although I could've delivered it through the mail, I hoped to personally give this to you. Sorry for making you run."

"No problem at all! This is what I should do."

"The specific benefits are written in the contract - take a look at it

before you sign. Aside from that, 1% of Future Technology's profits will be your bonus at the end of the year... Do you not need to look it over before you make a decision?" Jiang Chen asked as he saw Ning Jianhua was already signing his name on the contract.

1% of the profit of Future Technology! Considering Future Technology's current profitability, the number would at least exceed 100 million USD!

"No need! I trust the President." Ning Huajian calmed his hastened breaths, smiled, and put the pen aside.

If he was signing with anyone else, Ning Huajian would definitely be cautious. But he was signing with Jiang Chen, the highest ranked Han man on Forbes' wealth list, the President of a hundred billion company, his own boss! He didn't think of any reason why Jiang Chen would trick him into a false contract.

Since Jiang Chen was giving him such an important position, that already demonstrated his trust in him. What Ning Huajian did was to return his trust with his actions.

Jiang Chen laughed and took the copy that belonged to him.

"Okay, stop trying to flatter me. From today on, you'll be the new CEO of Future Technology. I won't say much more, but for the role of Future 1.0's project manager, get someone with the ability to replace you. This is one of Future Technology's key projects."

"Be assured that I'll get on it once I return!"

Jiang Chen then instructed Ning Huajian on a few more things before patting him on the shoulder to give him encouragement. He then took his leave.

Outside the coffee shop, Liu Haotian glanced at Ning Huajian who just passed him then took out his car keys. Not long after, Jiang Chen walked out of the coffee shop and walked toward him.

"Is that the new CEO of Future Technology?"

"That's right. He'll be responsible for contacting you. Of course, this news hasn't been released to the public yet. Before the end of the delegation, I hope you can keep it confidential."

"Is he trustworthy?" Liu Haotian started the car and grinned.

Since this was related to the grey exchange between the Liu family and Future Group, if the information was leaked, even if Liu family's power could cover up the news, it would be a problematic scandal regardless.

"If he wasn't trustworthy, would I give him control over such a big company?" Jiang Chen raised his eyebrows and asked back.

Liu Haotian seemed to accept Jiang Chen's explanation and didn't say anything else.

He started the car and headed to the hotel.

Chapter 558: Jiang Charity Fund

With the cooperation of Xin, the news only provided a brief summary of the explosion that happened a day ago. News of the first round of the business forum concluding without a happy ending was suppressed due to "consideration of the bigger picture."

Afterward, the media was engaged by another piece of news.

The President of Future Group conducted a news conference and announced the establishment of a personal charity fund named Jiang Charity Fund with an initial fund of 300 million USD. He suggested contributing at least 500 million USD every year. The charitable fund was a non-public fund by nature and the fund was mostly concerned with building education, health, and public infrastructure in poor areas.

The head of Han Charity Organization and the mayor of Shangjin all highly praised Jiang Chen's generosity. The media all heaped an overwhelming amount of praise on him. Xin's President, Zhang Yapin, spoke to the media saying that there were no limits when it came to charity and Jiang Chen's actions would become a symbol of friendship between the two countries.

At the same time, Hua's number one official expressed his agreement.

The fund manager was a man named Wu Botao arranged by the Liu family.

Jiang Chen didn't want Future Group to be too involved with the daily operations of the fund and fully relinquished control to the Liu family. If anything happened, they just needed to bring this Wu Botao out as a scapegoat and this wouldn't negatively influence Future Group.

300 million USD was approximately one-tenth of Future Group's profits in Hua. Of course, this number would probably more than

double next year because the server for the Phantom would come online by the beginning of next year when the worldly virtual reality MMORPG would be officially released. A lot of Wall Street analysts provided estimates that as long as no problems existed with the operation, just the MMORPG would generate at least 2 billion USD in annual profit.

And this didn't include the one time profit of selling the helmet.

Quite comically, the netizens of Hua didn't bring up many opinions about Jiang Chen in the "delegation" since they always viewed Jiang Chen as their own.

The reason why nobody brought it up was because the two countries were not comparable in terms of power - there was a friendly relationship, no competition, a high number of cultural similarities, and a common enemy. If Jiang Chen immigrated to the other country and it was exposed by the public, he would be criticized half dead by keyboard warriors.

But with the charitable fund becoming public, no one cared about his nationality. With Future Group's purposeful manipulation of public opinion, major social media outlets once again were flooded by the generous rich. Although Jiang Chen didn't care how people viewed him, to be frank, he felt good when so many praised him.

Especially when all the girls on Weibo spammed "Jiang Chen, Jiang Chen, I want to bear your baby" or "Nation's husband, mua mua mua"...

Wait, something wasn't right.

Whatever.

Let's put the charitable cause aside.

The Zhou family, who put up a good attitude, began to feel worried when Jiang Chen didn't contact them.

Seeing that Jiang Chen suddenly started a charity, Liu Xiangguo suddenly changed his stance during the internal discussion and

pointed his spear at the supporter behind Li Yanhong and the Wang family who held a strong opinion against Future Group, Zhou Antai immediately realized the Liu family already contacted Jiang Chen and clearly reached some form of agreement!

While he was cursing how Liu Xiangguo screwed him over, Zhou Antai couldn't do anything about that. From the beginning, the Zhou family was on the opposite side against the Wang family and stood with Future Group. Even if he changed his stance now, the people on the opposite side wouldn't view him too highly.

Regardless of where it came from, the grass on top of the wall was unwelcome.

The Zhou family starting to lose their cool and contacted Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen thought it was comical when the Zhou family came in contact through Zhou Zihao. He obviously guessed the Zhou family was there to ask for benefits.

But different from the Liu family with influence concentrated in politics, the Zhou family's connections and resources concentrated on military tech, energy, and other state-owned enterprises. Jiang Chen knew they didn't need more cash, but rather, wanted to help them gain technical prowess.

Jiang Chen didn't let the Zhou family leave emptyhanded. Instead, he took out the piece of cake known as nutrient supply and tied Zhou family to Future Group's bandwagon.

With the Zhou family in the lead, they established a food company with an import and export license in Yangcheng to purchase military-grade nutrient supply with high calories and nutrient level from Xin. The product was repackaged and sold to the military logistics department. In theory, Hua's military could not directly partner up with foreign entities, but through this gimmick, the problem was gone.

Compared with Russia with a weak economy, Hua with a booming economy was, without a doubt, a partner with a brighter future. The Zhou family decisively signed a contract for 3 million boxes of nutrient supply. Just this batch alone netted Jiang Chen 600 million USD alone. As to how much the Zhou family would gain politically on this military necessity with long shelf life, high efficiency and low logistical demand wasn't something of his concern.

The three-day delegation concluded.

With business contracts worth 2 billion USD, the Xin President along with the rest of the delegation boarded the plane at the airport in the capital.

Based on the previous plan, Jiang Chen would follow Xin's delegation onboard to UA. But because of the "small incident" that happened at the hotel, it made him change his mind.

Before he was certain the CIB was uninvolved with this attack, he didn't want to joke about his own safety. Therefore, Jiang Chen temporarily canceled his plan to accompany the delegation. Instead, he chose a representative from Future Group to replace him on this visit.

Some people were secretly happy about Jiang Chen's decision while some people expressed their regret. But regardless, Future Group was only a company by definition and a missing President wouldn't affect the relationship between two countries.

While the UA President welcomed Xin's delegation, the new President of UA personally sent Jiang Chen an email to express his regret Jiang Chen couldn't make the business forum that took place on Wall Street.

But the President only expressed regret from his personal perspective without delivering many thoughts. They wouldn't know if the attack at the hotel was related to CIB or not; they could only express understanding regarding why Jiang Chen made this

decision.

Since CIB conducted an attack on Jiang Chen without approval before, it was reasonable that the attack was related to CIB. But the CIB director in the far Flo felt wronged as this attack had nothing to do with CIB at all, but he was called multiple times to the Rainbow Mansion by the President.

The intention for the newly elected President to win over Xin through Jiang Chen was obvious. He wouldn't be foolish enough to make a move on Jiang Chen at this time. Especially since the last mission in Hua caused CIB's force in Hua to be severely crippled,. Even if he wanted to do something, it was questionable if he had the ability.

Chapter 559: Return to Wanghai

Night in Wanghai was as illuminating as an ocean of stars. The shadow of the reinforced concrete was as gloomy as a dark forest.

A long time ago, Jiang Chen thought this place was all there was to the world. He would fight here for a 50-square-meter apartment and a steady job. But right now, as he glanced down from the plane above, he felt this was all so trivial.

He had two purposes for returning to Wanghai. One was to discuss the virtual reality online retailer pilot project, the other was to fulfill a promise.

When he sent Zhang Yapin on his way to UA, he also boarded a plane and headed to Wanghai with Liu Haotian's company.

Ayesha wasn't with him. To prevent the assassins hidden in the dark from attacking Xia Shiyu, Jiang Chen chose to leave her with Xia Shiyu.

Before Xia Shiyu left for Xin, she still needed to return to Xiangjiang to tie some loose ends. The CEO handover still required one week of time and she still needed some personal time to make sure everything was in order. Because she was an only child, she planned to bring her parents to Xin to make it easier to take care of the two elders. It would require her to return to her hometown and first bring the two elders in Xiangjiang.

Jiang Chen raised both his hands in support of Xia Shiyu bringing her parents along. His parents lived a great life in Xin with a mansion, boat, and servants, but the downside was that they never really saw their relatives and friends, so they were quite lonely. Since Xia Shiyu's parents were close to his parents, they could visit each other and at least form a table of Majong.

Ayesha disagreed with his decision to not bring her along. The attack did happen at a hotel and she was obviously worried about

Jiang Chen being alone, but he used one sentence to convince her.

"If they really choose me as a target, that's the worst decision they'll make."

In terms of personal combat abilities, only a few in the world could beat him. The reason why he chose to go alone was also to trick the snake into coming out of hiding.

Ayesha had to follow his orders. But she still insisted on moving the Ghost Agent waiting for orders in Hua close to him to prevent any unsuspected situations from occurring.

When they got off the plane, Jiang Chen's ride went from a Hongqi L9 to a Benz. The person responsible for delegate reception didn't speak much with the two of them as he handed them the key before leaving.

Before he left Hua, his identity was considered a foreign delegate, so he would be accompanied by people from the Concierge Department. But because this was the Wang family's territory, before Wang Dehai made his stance clear, the local concierge couldn't be overly friendly to Jiang Chen.

Compared to the arrangements in Shangjin, Wanghai's attitude toward Jiang Chen wasn't like he was receiving a President of a multinational company at all.

"I hope you don't mind. Since you did trick him into Coro Island's investment project, it's understandable for the Wang family to have a little attitude," Liu Haotian explained to Jiang Chen after he sat into the driver's seat.

"Of course I don't mind, as long as they don't come to make trouble," Jiang Chen said nonchalantly.

"Even the number one official won't go against the Liu and Zhou family simultaneously, let alone the Wang family. So you don't have to worry - they know the extent they can go. But you have to be careful and avoid letting them get any material to blackmail you

with."

Jiang Chen looked at Liu Haotian in surprise and smiled.

"Oh? You already know?"

Jiang Chen was referring to the agreement between Future Group and the Zhou family regarding nutrient supply.

"Of course," Liu Haotian answered concisely.

It was already late into the night. Jiang Chen rejected Liu Haotian's hotel arrangements and instead, he inputted a location on the GPS and asked him to take him there.

The car quickly arrived in a wealthy area. In the apocalypse, past Sujiang was Jiang Chen's Camp 27. But in the modern world, there was only a small mansion that belonged to him there.

Before he left Wanghai, he gave the key to this place to Liu Yao. A house couldn't be left unattended without people living inside because even the most beautiful mansion would become a haunted house. Since he had no close friends in Hua nor did he lack the money, he gave it to his mistress.

Jiang Chen's identity information was still registered at security at the gate. He pressed his thumb before security allowed him access.

The car arrived in front of the mansion. Liu Haotian saw the light was still on and looked at Jiang Chen.

"Someone is inside?"

Jiang Chen didn't answer his question. He unbuckled his seatbelt and looked at him without a change in expression.

"Pick me up tomorrow at 9. Since your travel is paid for, I won't arrange your accommodations."

Liu Haotian understood Jiang Chen's true meaning as he smirked. Without saying anything, he left.

Jiang Chen took a deep breath in front of the door. Just as he was about to press the alarm, he saw the light in the bathroom on the second floor and an evil smile appeared on his face. Whenever he thought about Liu Yao's 36D curvature, his couldn't control his urge to "prank" her.

It was ten o'clock at night.

Just like her usual nighttime routine, Liu Yao took a rose-scented bath after exercising.

As a celebrity rising in popularity and as the mistress of Future Group's President, she took extra care of herself. She knew everything she possessed today was all because of that man. If that man lost interest in her, she would have nothing.

Liu Yao washed away the sweat on her body, stared at the water droplets rolling down her tender skin and relaxed. The white mist from the bathtub fogged up her vision and allowed her thoughts to gradually rise with the mist.

Among the rose petals, the water reflected a stunning face. The face that made countless women jealous and countless men smitten was mixed with a hint of melancholy.

She recollected the week of vacation on Coro Island with Jiang Chen and her face began to turn red.

Although she was just a mistress, the feeling of "giving up above cloud nine" every time Jiang Chen gave it to her made her hooked to him like drugs. It made her sometimes wonder if she wasn't a mistress—

Liu Yao forcefully shook her wet hair and snapped back from her unrealistic thoughts. She stared at the rose petals in the bathtub and scorned herself.

[It's impossible...]

Intoxicated in an unrealistic dream would only hurt herself. She knew the only reason he accepted her wasn't because of love but

because her presence happened to fill the regrets of his past carried in his heart.

She couldn't pass the boundary and turn this emotion from intimacy to a hindrance. If she really wanted him to give her a righteous name, it would cause trouble for him, and of course, he wouldn't give in. And that would mean she would no longer be a mistress.

Perhaps Future Technology's CEO, Xia Shiyu, would be his future wife. Or perhaps the exotic girl who always followed him would be... her name was Ayesha or something. Liu Yao heard him mentioning her during their video chat.

[But regardless, I won't be one of the candidates.]

Her glowing skin, smooth as jade, weaved through the water surface covered in petals. Liu Yao splashed the milky bath water on her face and combed her black hair mixed with petals to the back of her head.

"Splash—"

She stood up and dragged a bath towel to cover up her attractive figure. Her gorgeous feet stepped out of the bathtub onto the cold floor.

She walked in front of a mirror. Just as she was about to pick up the hair dryer, she suddenly heard something that resembled a heavy object hitting the ground in the living room.

Her hand holding the dryer stopped in midair and Liu Yao held her breath.

It was quite frightening to hear a weird sound living in a massive house alone. She was certain she heard something drop on the floor in the living room.

[Could it be a thief?]

Liu Yao's heart suddenly flinched and her face turned pale white.

But she soon rejected the possibility - no thief could get into the community with such a high level of security.

But if it wasn't a thief, who was it?

She gulped, put down the dryer, sneakily moved to the door, and put her ear against the door although she thought she was being too suspicious with an action like this.

She held her breath and listened for a while without hearing any other sounds.

"Was I just hearing things? I must be too tired lately..."

Liu Yao was relieved and gently leaned against the door.

Because of the popularity of her movie, her popularity increased as well.

Not only did more movies come her way, but she even received invitations from label companies. She sang in movies and her pure but melodious voice received countless positive comments on the web, so some label companies thought to ask her to release an album. Because of the recording sessions, she had been tired every day. Perhaps she was so exhausted that she was now hearing things...

Liu Yao comforted herself.

But just as she felt relieved, she suddenly heard music outside the door.

This sudden music scared Liu Yao to death, but her face quickly turned red because she realized that the music was her new ringtone.

Who's calling?

As she thought to herself, Liu Yao took another towel and wrapped her hair.

When she put her hand on the doorknob, Liu Yao gently bit her red lips. She already convinced herself that the sound from the

living room was just an illusion, but she still felt anxious when it came time to leave the bathroom.

She took a deep breath, turned the doorknob, and peeked out the door.

After confirming there was nothing outside, her ears burned for acting so over-the-top.

Her right hand squeezed her towel in front of her chest and she ran to her room with her wet feet.

She picked up the phone from her table...

She was stunned.

There had been no phone call. When she unlocked her screen, she discovered it was a music player playing. What just rang wasn't her ringtone but music downloaded to her phone.

Intense fear began to overwhelm her.

There was someone else in the room.

Someone opened her phone!

To lure her here!

With lips trembling, Liu Yao's face was deathly white. She didn't even dare to turn her head as she was afraid to see a strange face. Her naked feet moved back while shaking. She couldn't even find the courage to run back.

Suddenly, the lights turned off.

Liu Yao screamed and turned around to run. But before she ran two steps, she smashed into a firm chest.

The man in black hugged her, threw her onto the bed, and jumped to cover her mouth. His strong muscles were like rocks - regardless of how her graceful hands punched him, it was futile.

With his free left hand, the man pulled open her white towel.

Just then, that man screamed out in agony.

When Liu Yao heard his scream, she stopped.

The scream sounded familiar.

The man let her go, removed his comical mask, and rolled his eyes at her.

"Biting me when you see me - are you a dog?"

Tears began to flow out of her eyes. With the help of the moonlight, Jiang Chen started to lose his collected cool.

"Eh? Don't cry, I came to give you a surprise. Ahem, of course, it was my bad to scare you. I'm sorry..."

Liu Yao's intense reaction was something he expected. But to be honest, when he saw her reaction, Jiang Chen felt an odd happiness. Of course, he reflected upon himself. Although she was his mistress, and although it was just a prank, when he thought about it carefully, it was over the line to do something like this to a woman living alone.

"Pervert!" Liu Yao threw the towel on her head onto Jiang Chen's head in embarrassment.

The aroma of rose engulfed his nose and made Jiang Chen's mind bewildered.

He removed the towel on his head and awkwardly touched his nose.

"Sorry, I did..."

"Do you want to continue?"

"Eh?"

Without sitting up on the bed, Liu Yao gently bit her lips and her face reflected a hint of attractive shyness. The petals between her hair and the dim moonlight scattered in the room made her attractive figure glow even more.

"What... just... Don't make me say it." Liu Yao, with her hair

messy, pouted and looked away.

Jiang Chen felt a lower abdominal heat turning on as his breathing turned heavy.

He threw the towel to the ground and didn't forget to put on the comical black mask.

Liu Yao's screams reverberated in the room again. While she was fending off the attacker with her graceful fists, the dark room became lively again...

Either she was a great actress or because the reunion made her especially impassioned, Liu Yao's acting was impeccable.

The moon was covered by an embarrassed cloud, unable to directly shine on the intimacy of the room.

Chapter 560: The Reunion

To use immersive virtual reality in the world of e-commerce was the next step for Future Technology after VR MMORPG.

Imagine being able to shop without leaving home or going on a shopping spree without moving from the computer... oh no, the person in front of the helmet would no longer have to worry if the clothes bought online would fit because you could "take" the clothes out from the shopping cart and directly "put it on" your body to try them yourself!

With the introduction of VR shopping, it meant that the only advantage of physical stores would cease to exist. Physical storefronts compared to e-commerce stores without an actual location lacked the advantage of saving on rent costs. Now that the VR shopping experience was brought to the same level, it could be foreseen that once it was adopted by the mass market, it would bring disruptive changes to retail and even real estate markets.

Technology with such a bright future was obviously not going to be ignored by the e-commerce giants.

For example, VR shopping, or the concept known as "buy+," was initiated by Ali at the beginning of 2016 but because of the restrictive nature of technology, Ali's VR shopping experience had a lackluster effect, far less than promoted.

It was impractical to design an interactive VR experience for every store due to the work required, and it also greatly increased the number of stores that could register at a VR mall.

Also, VR glasses could only bring a limited experience to customers. With just images alone, it offered no difference compared to shopping through a screen. But if they used high tech 3D movement capture technology to replicate the physical dimensions of the products, it would increase the cost. Would customers really purchase VR glasses with a price tag of over 1000

USD just to shop? Perhaps yes, but rich people only accounted for a small portion of sales.

Therefore, buy+ required a medium that had a high market penetration rate that could also maximize the shopping experience.

The Phantom medium happened to satisfy both conditions.

The high sales set the foundation for a massive user base. Immersive virtual reality technology would provide a comprehensive experience to users. Because of this, Ali chose to contact Jiang Chen immediately after the business forum, hoping to partner up in the "VR + e-commerce" strategy.

But Jiang Chen didn't immediately reply to Ma Yun who called him personally because he still had to discuss this with Xia Shiyu. He wondered if they should partner up or take care of the retail aspect in-house.

Could Future Technology ditch Ali and do e-commerce themselves? After discussion, Jiang Chen and Xia Shiyu both reached a consensus that while it was theoretically possible, there was no practical reason to do so. Future Technology had no experience in the e-commerce market, and it would be a lost cause if they spent a large amount of time and energy to start in the e-commerce division.

Just like building an aircraft carrier, it wasn't necessary to build every single screw themselves.

With an absolute advantage in technology, Future Technology only needed to focus on developing the channel while the content could be created by Ali, JD, Amazon, and eBay, who all had a wealth of experience and resources.

As for how the partnership would take place, that was the purpose of Jiang Chen's visit to Wanghai.

The next morning, Liu Haotian arrived at the mansion as

promised.

When he saw Jiang Chen walking out of the mansion glowing, he guessed what happened last night. He only smirked without saying anything and opened the door for Jiang Chen. After Jiang Chen set the destination on the GPS, Liu Haotian took Jiang Chen on his way.

There were a lot of enterprises that invited Jiang Chen to discuss a "VR + e-commerce" relationship - both domestic and international players.

Based on the negotiation strategy discussed with Xia Shiyu, Jiang Chen didn't look for Ali first but rather, he sought out Ali's international competitor, Amazon.

Amazon first asked Future Technology to make development tools and licensing available for virtual reality, and the e-commerce application would be designed by them.

It wasn't the right time to make development tools available. Based on their proposal, it was equivalent to Amazon getting rid of them. If "VR + e-commerce" became extremely successful, it would have nothing to do with Future Technology.

The two parties couldn't compromise at all on the fundamental problem and negotiations couldn't continue, so Jiang Chen stopped trying to negotiate with them and directly went to speak with eBay.

When Amazon realized Future Group wasn't going to negotiate with them further, they instantly became anxious.

Since Future Technology was the only company that mastered immersive virtual reality technology, if Amazon allowed their competitor to create a virtual reality platform first, it would be a detrimental blow to Amazon's business. Amazon realized this immediately and changed their strong stance. They signaled their willingness to make concessions on software while requesting

another negotiation session.

Therefore, the two-party meeting became a three-party meeting.

At the same time, Ali, who was excluded, could no longer sit around. They previous thought Jiang Chen would go seek them out, but Future Technology was almost close to reaching an agreement with Amazon and eBay!

Ali couldn't fall at the hands of their competitors now. Based on the popularity of the Phantom in the international market, it was a great opportunity for Ali to expand its international market through a VR platform!

Boss Ma, who just flew from Shangjin to Wanghai, immediately sat down with Jiang Chen and invited him for a meal at his own place.

Han people had the tradition of discussing business over the dinner table. Since Boss Ma personally invited Jiang Chen for a drink, it gave him all the respect he was due.

Jiang Chen had been waiting for exactly this.

Of course, he wasn't just waiting for Ma Yun to propose a few toasts over the dinner table nor was he planning to exclude Ali from negotiations entirely. The reason why he didn't actively seek negotiations with Ali first was just to force Ali to stop sitting around.

Future Technology was close to a deal with eBay and Amazon. As the fourth party with aspirations of being included, Ali had to bring some sincerity to the negotiation table.

Ali didn't disappoint Jiang Chen. Compared to the foreign companies with stricter terms, they not only made concessions in cooperation, but they even proposed a plan clearly more favorable to Future Technology.

When Amazon and eBay saw this, they knew they had been tricked. Considering how interested Jiang Chen looked, Ali's

representative was relieved.

The exact plan was the following:

Future Technology would design a platform-based software, with Ali to provide the content. Users would purchase items from Future Technology's virtual reality market with Ali deciding which goods could enter the market. Confirmation of the purchase would be done through the internal browser in the helmet which would jump to Taobao's page, or Taobao could design a more simple purchase and pay page for the virtual reality market.

It was like Future Technology was the market, while Ali and other e-commerce giants were suppliers and store leasers. The former dictated the location while the latter provided the supplies. The retailers registered under each e-commerce platform were like products on the shelf.

To put it simply, Future Technology only provided the platform, so e-commerce was still e-commerce.

With this plan, Jiang Chen threw his previously prepared plan away. The professionals indeed knew what they were doing, so he didn't have any reason to reject their plan at all.

While Amazon and eBay were displeased, they couldn't bring out a better proposal. They could only accept this proposal.

Later, Jiang Chen invited other e-commerce platforms interested in VR into the negotiation. Each party would be given a market share, divide the VR distribution channel, and enhance the partnership agreement.

In a week, eight "VR + e-commerce" agreements were signed. Strictly speaking, it was the first deal Jiang Chen signed as a President for the company.

And it was a mega deal worth ten billion!

Chapter 561: VR + eCommerce

The Fishbone's software development department had been meeting the software development demand in the modern world. In the short-term, it is feasible, but inefficient from a long-term perspective. While the apocalypse didn't lack talents with an incredibly low cost of labor, it is gated by population.

Future Group is constantly expanding, but the software development team only grew by less than ten people in the apocalypse.

Take the developed Godly Land for example. The development of the world virtual reality MMORPG took nearly one year based on the developed content before the war. Based on the stats given by Du Yongkang, with the standard of a development studio before the war, the content update and maintenance of the game of the large-scale RPG would take at least fifty people.

Jiang Chen didn't tell him that the MMORPG may potentially have over one hundred million players since only Future Technology offered the immersive virtual reality MMORPG. Based on the large player base, in order to ensure the game content was interesting, the project team would without a doubt be bigger than 500 people.

The number was not an exaggeration at all. Take Blizzard's bloated development team for example. A high-quality MMORPG would take a lot of people to maintain. Even if possessed artificial intelligence to assist the allocation of game storage, basic artificial intelligence's limitation in creativity meant that some things couldn't replace human labor.

Because of this, the release of the development tool will come eventually. Only if more people knew how to develop the virtual reality software could Future Technology hire more programmers to support the virtual empire he established.

But the release of the development software can't be rushed. At least until Future Technology's core possessed a technical advantage.

Half a year ago, when Future Group's building finished construction on Coro Island, he moved some of the core technical team to Xin to receive training on the VR development tool "virtual 4.0" and VR image processing software "pictogram 2.1".

But the troublesome part was, while the interfaces of the program software were friendly to use, to the people without any experience in this field, it was difficult to comprehend. The result of the training was obvious, they took half a year of time before Future Technology's technical core finally gained some understanding and reached a beginner's level.

It would at least take another half a year to one year before they could master the software.

Because of this, to ensure Future Technology's competitive advantage in this field, the publishing of the software must be delayed for at least half a year. In this half a year, Jiang Chen must depend on the programmers on the wasteland to help in developing the software he needs.

With two proposals in hand, Jiang Chen temporarily returned to the apocalypse.

...

It was already late into December; Wanghai on the wasteland was covered by snow and stood gracefully.

When Jiang Chen just returned to the Fishbone base, holiday spirit still lingered in the air.

With ample resources, the quality of life of NAC people gradually got better.

Although Christmas was not a statuary holiday for the PAC, people before the war would usually do something on this day.

With the idea "the year has almost passed by, it's rare to have a few peaceful months, so let's do something to celebrate", Miss Generous took out the frozen meat near its expiration date and announced the second BBQ party would be held on Christmas Day!

Therefore, a bunch of people who don't believe in Jesus Christ celebrated the spirit of the holiday on this cold day while praying to the higher being they know doesn't exist "long and prosperity to the NAC".

"Yo, pervert, you're back? Only if you were back a day earlier. Yao Yao baked a giant turkey yesterday." Lin Lin who was reading manga on the sofa was dangling her slim legs leisurely.

The radiators in the winter almost made people feel sluggish.

"If you keep calling me that name, be careful. I might actually eat you one day." Jiang Chen sighed at the bad mouth girl that turned into a useless being.

[This doesn't feel like the apocalypse at all.]

Lin Lin oddly didn't rebuttal back. Jiang Chen noticed she covered her face with the manga book.

"Manga... Sixth Street sells these now. Where is Sun Jiao?" Jiang Chen looked around in the living around and discovered only Lin Lin was there.

"Sister Sun Jiao should be at the community center now. When you're not here, she has been doing the work you should have been doing."

While touched emotionally, Jiang Chen looked at Lin Lin in surprise.

Lin Lin was embarrassed by the way he was looking at her and blushed. Then she moved the manga even higher.

"Why are you looking at me like that?"

"Nothing, I'm just impressed that even Lin Lin knows how to take

care of people now."

"Hello! What do you mean? Did I not know how to take care of people before?!"

Before Lin Lin threw her manga book in his direction in embarrassment, Jiang Chen put down the pudding and left.

Other than Lin Lin whose Project Garden of Eden came to a halt because of the snow, the girls in the mansion all had something to do every day.

Yao Yao still stayed in her own room and developed the program Jiang Chen gave her. The little loli worked diligently. Jiang Chen remembered when she bought her, her computer rating was only C, but after studying for a long time, the program she developed was even praised by the head of the software development department.

Jiang Chen put the gift he bought her on the table, then followed the girl's demand and put her on his legs while rubbing her soft hair.

To be honest, he was supposed to be helping Yao Yao alleviate the stress of work, but when Jiang Chen saw her eyelashes shaking from feeling so comfortable, Jiang Chen felt all his weariness also disappear.

He spent some peaceful time with her then left the mansion and headed to the community center.

...

It was snowing outside. A trial of water droplets hung on the window.

Because of the heating system, the office was warm.

"Sister, why don't we just call it a day?" Sun Jiao put her head on the desk in exhaustion with the pen used to sign documents in her mouth.

"No, sister. Brother-in-law gave you such an important job to you because he trusts you, please just work a little harder. The next document is Beer Bottle Firearms Company's trade agreement for steel and rice in exchange for firearms."

"Can I just sign it? Who dares to trick us in an agreement?" Sun Jiao raised her eyebrows and said audaciously.

"No, we set the rules. If we can't even follow our own rules, then the order brother-in-law worked so hard to establish would go down the drain. To avoid unnecessary conflict, please look through every detail in the agreement."

"Can you not use brother-in-law? It feels weird. You did it too..." Whenever Sun Jiao thought about the intimacy shared with her sister, she couldn't help but blush.

"No, please let your young sister just have fun." A devilish smile appeared on Sun Xiaorou's face.

Jiang Chen always thought whenever she smiled like that, it was especially like her sister.

When Sun Jiao saw Jiang Chen appear in front of the door, the pen dropped onto the table from her mouth.

Sun Xiaorou saw the yearning in her sister's eyes as she face-palmed with a smile.

"Ahhhh... It looks like today's work has to be pushed to tomorrow."

Like a gust of wind just breezed by, Jiang Chen hugged Sun Jiao who dove in between his arms. The longing followed the temperature in front of his chest and mouth passed into the deepest part of his heart.

"Screw you, you don't even visit me..."

"I'm afraid that I won't go back if I come back."

"Really?"

"Really."

He already became the emperor of the apocalypse and free from the threat from the Natural Selection Fleet. The Project Garden of Eden was in progress and in ten year's time, life here may be better than the life in the modern world.

While they were exchanging their deepest emotions with their eyes, the door behind them was locked by Sun Xiaorou.

"Mhmm?"

Jiang Chen just wanted to turn around to ask why Sun Xiaorou locked the door when his back was blocked by the same gentleness.

Sun Jiao looked at her sister hugging Jiang Chen from behind and said in shock, "Xiaorou?"

Sun Xiaorou didn't bother with her sister, bit the tip of Jiang Chen's ear, and blew warm air in naughtiness.

"Compared to sister, I also waited a long time..."

The two sisters exchanged eye contact. Devil smiles simultaneously appeared while they reached for his inexplicable part with their graceful hands.

"Wait, wait—"

The abrupt but envious by many shout stopped. In the office with strong sound insulation, the reunion ceremony officially started...

Chapter 562: Quantum Communication Satellites

When Jiang Chen came out of the office, it was already nighttime. Staring at the dark night and the dancing snowflakes, he thought about how he just wasted an entire day. Jiang Chen couldn't help but bury his chin into his scarf and sigh. He still had things to do in Wanghai, and after that, he must go back to Xin. With the official release of the virtual reality MMORPG on the horizon, he didn't have a lot of extra time.

But when he looked at the two girls wrapped around his arms, the slightest dissatisfaction instantly faded into the snow.

The next morning, in a winter suit, while traversing through the knee-high snow, Jiang Chen came to the community center. Just as he was about to go find Du Yongkang, the guy came to find him. When he saw the stack of documents in Jiang Chen's hand, he immediately started to complain to Jiang Chen with a troubled face.

"Boss... Oh no, I mean General. Our department really doesn't have enough people. Including me, everyone here is doing two people's work. Of course, I'm not complaining, I'm asking you to check up on Wang Qin to see if the assistance I requested could be approved faster?"

Seeing the poor Du Yongkang, Jiang Chen felt sympathetic as he consoled.

"Is it that serious?"

"What else... No one in my department works without dark circles."

Jiang Chen gazed at the dark circles around his eyes and felt his pain.

The software development department in the beginning was

envied by everyone. They were the freest in the entire base. Not only did they have great benefits, but they also didn't need to risk their lives and spent all day writing and copying code. Everyone wanted to be in that department!

But now it was different. With external and internal threats eliminated and most of the battles had ended, the knights with achievements began to enjoy their pleasant life. They either spent their days shooting at targets or patrolling around the territory in a vehicle. They raised their heads up high in front of the refugees, enjoying their envious and respectful looks.

On the contrary, the people in the software development department couldn't get busier. The credit payment system, Wanghai communication station maintenance, market trade software, and Chu Nan recently proposed localized net for NAC to centralize the administration, judicial, and taxation systems...

But who is going to do all that?

Wang Qin thought about it, and only the software development department knew the most about computers, so she stuffed all the work to Du Yongkang's department.

"I will go talk to her about it."

Du Yongkang's expression immediately turned pleasant. "Hehe, thank you."

"Don't worry." Jiang Chen acknowledged it and then put the proposal for the VR social media platform and retail platform into his hands.

Jiang Chen looked at Du Yongkang without a desire to live anymore and patted his shoulder, feeling embarrassed. "Help me out with the software on these two proposals. It shouldn't be too difficult. Other projects can be slowed down for now... Ahem, I will double the overtime pay with more people on the way to assist you."

Although compassionate about his current situation, the software still must be completed.

Looking at Du Yongkang work away feebly, Jiang Chen felt guilty.

Should he increase the benefits to the software development department? A box of milk and a carton of eggs every week...

As he thought, Jiang Chen came to the logistics department and spoke with Wang Qin who was auditing the warehouse data.

"It's not that I don't want to, but no one is applying." When Wang Qin heard Jiang Chen's intention, she pushed up the glasses on her nose and explained to him, "Currently, even in the Sixth Street, the amount of programmers is scarce. Whenever I receive an application, I immediately send them to his department."

"What about Fallout Shelter 027? There should be programmers there right?"

"Yes, but almost none that's focused on programming. And the experts in each field all have research projects they must complete, freely moving them around would solve one problem but create another," Wang Qin said.

It was difficult to move them around with them having research projects. Without better solutions, Jiang Chen could only instruct Wang Qin to increase the salary of the software development department and post additional hiring information at the Sixth Street. Also, he messaged Zhao Chenwu to ask him to keep an eye out for programmers out of the province and try to recruit any programmers with a rating above C.

If the applicant was a female, lower technical requirements could be allowed. Rating D or E could be considered since the entire department was made up almost entirely of males which made Jiang Chen feel bad for the single programmers working so hard...

The main purpose of the trip was to give Du Yongkang the two

proposals and visit the girls as well as the subordinates.

After he toured around the community center, Jiang Chen came outside. Seeing there was still some time, he went to the Aerospace Technology Research Institute along the way to speak with Jiang Lin who was busy working in the plant.

Some time ago, Jiang Chen did instruct him about designing quantum communication satellites, and he didn't know about his current progress. Since there was still some time, Jiang Chen went to check up on him.

Jiang Lin stuffed the equipment in his hands to his colleague beside him when he saw Jiang Chen come in.

Jiang Chen stopped by the workstation and glanced at the cubical item on the workstation, "this is the quantum communication satellite?"

"Pretty close. The appearance is like one. The most critical quantum communication module is not installed yet, we are still waiting for Fallout Shelter 027. I heard there is a problem with a cooling device and the unfitted specification needs to be redesigned. You seem to be disappointed?" Jiang Lin looked at Jiang Chen in surprise.

First thing first, while quantum communication and quantum computer both have quantum in them, they are two completely different things. The so-called quantum communication refers to the use of quantum entanglement effects of information transmission to create a new form of communication, it is a combined discipline between quantum theory and information theory. In the modern world, this discipline recently has shifted from theory to experimentation. At the end of the 22nd century, the study of quantum communication has long passed beyond the military field to commercial applications.

Compared to the fast but "unsecure" Klein particles as well as the gravitational wave with slow research development, quantum

communication was indeed more user-friendly.

There is not much to talk about the advantage of security, especially when "non-classical" information relay research achieved a major breakthrough. The previously super light speed quantum communication, which was supposed to violate relativity, had also become a reality.

Not saying other things, just from today's internet, everyone was connected to the internet, but it was done using underwater cables. Why did Google publish its global wifi project for so long without any progress? Partially because of the crowded communication channel with the most fundamental reason being that traditional satellite as an internet node is infeasible from a technical point of view.

The synchronous orbit is located 36000 kilometers away from Earth. To use traditional satellites to provide wifi service, without considering the electromagnetic wave signal attenuation, having 500 pings was the best scenario. What does having 500 pings mean? Basically, you can't see your own team when playing LOL.

Therefore, if using traditional satellites to provide internet service, it is okay to send an email, quite difficult to make a call, but don't even think about playing an online game.

And the quantum communication satellite sitting in front of Jiang Chen right now was a satellite that could "conquer the challenges faced by traditional satellites" and the communication relay station for the virtual reality network.

Jiang Chen examined the satellite and said while touching his chin.

"I previously thought it would look a bit better."

Jiang Lin took a moment to process his words and started to laugh. "There is no need to consider aerodynamics in space, and therefore any shape is the same. If you need, I can make it

spherical, but every part needs to be redesigned."

"No need, I'm just saying." Jiang Chen facepalmed.

It was not cheap to build a satellite. It would only pain him if the satellite must be redesigned. Since the wasteland didn't even have these things, Wang Qin didn't complain about the unreasonable budget to the Aerospace Technology Research Institute.

Chapter 563: Perhaps it is a mutated human?

"Good job, could this satellite be completed by the start of January?"

"The start of January... but it is already the end of the month." Jiang Lin rubbed his muddled hair with a bitter smile and sighed. "I'll try my best. If Fallout Shelter 027 can solve the cooling module problem, we can finish very soon."

"I will head to Fallout Shelter 027 in a bit. I will help you bring it up with them."

At the beginning of January, Celestial Trade would start its second satellite launch project. The plan was to launch a high-frequency communication satellite used to provide free wifi service to Xin's territory in order to increase the tourism rating of Pannu Islands. Of course, Jiang Chen was not foolish enough to tell people this is a quantum communication satellite. As to how a satellite could provide web service with 20 ping and below, Celestial Trade wouldn't comment on this topic.

Based on the diplomatic relationship with nearby New Guinea, Australia, and New Zealand, this satellite would provide paid wifi service to part of those territories. As to how to price, Celestial Trade would send out representatives to discuss with the countries' telecommunication providers to negotiate a reasonable price.

If there were half a million paid users per month, the maintenance fee would breakeven.

"If you plan to go to Fallout Shelter 027, please help me to bring this over." Jiang Lin remembered something, walked beside the workstation, and removed a palm-sized circuit board.

"This is?" Jiang Chen took the circuit board, examined it, but

didn't manage to determine the use.

"Great item. The trade fleet of Zhao Corporation exchanged this with a can of food from a scavenger." Jiang Lin chuckle. "Type XK92 Double Feet Armored Unit's main control chip for its power system, it is the first time I have seen such a complete board."

"Could you create a prototype out of it?" Jiang Chen's expression changed.

But Jiang Lin touched his nose and looked away awkwardly.

...

"I have to disappoint you. But the technology analyzed out from the main control chip could increase the performance of our current Type-K1 kinetic skeleton, and T-3, T-4 power armor."

[Made me excited for nothing.]

[But better than nothing.]

Jiang Chen rolled his eyes and put the palm-sized chip into the box before stuffing it into his pocket.

"If there is nothing else, I'm going to go."

"Mhmm, nothing else. I heard the Steel Airship is almost complete at Camp 27. You can go take a look. The last time I saw it, it is quite magnificent." Jiang Lin said while watching him depart.

When Jiang Chen arrived at Camp 27, he witnessed the glorious airship.

It was a fortress built by steel floating in the air outside of Camp 27 around 20 meters in the air. The "fortress" was hoisted by robust graphene cables and connected by steel scaffolds. The construction robots and engineers worked on it simultaneously to complete the remainder 50% of the work.

It was 100 meters long, 20 meters wide; a total of three decks. The bottom of the airship was like the stomach of a seal, but the tip of the boat that could be opened and closed was just a menacing shark

head.

The wings that extended horizontally out were connected with mega-sized turbine engines used on Type-51 Helicopters to provide the massive airship with the thrust to move forward. The robotic air attached directly below the airship provided the hubs used to park the helicopter. The hundred meter long graphene cables dragged onto the hover cabin which could deploy four Tiger II tanks to the ground.

The layout of the airship was similar to a "U" with the top deck being an airstrip that allowed for the vertical landing of the Aurora-20. A large amount of the space inside the airship was used as the helium room to provide buoyant force. Only the middle deck along with one-tenth of the internal space allowed were designed for personnel. The lower deck contained supplies and firearms, as well as a room for one Type-50 J-unit electromagnetic pulse cannon to be added to cause destruction to the targets on the ground.

The mainframe of the airship used superplastic steel intermittent armor as well as high strength bubble aluminum material. While it maintained certain anti-bullet and anti-bomb capability, it reduced the net weight of the airship to the extreme. Of course, the defense of the airship relied on nitrogen armor and laser anti-missile system, as well as the supportive firepower of the ground force to enemy anti-air units.

The usage of the airship was not designed to drop bombs on enemies' heads like in World War Two, but rather act as a "ground aircraft carrier".

The airship was designed with 100 tons of net weight and capable of carrying 500 tons of supplies. Without the need to pass through dangerous territories filled with mutants and zombies, it drastically reduced the consumption of a mobilizing force to inland. Without considering the hot weapons in enemies' hand, the airship was a legendary unit in the apocalypse.

Since only rare mutants could fly high in the air.

Based on the words of the chief engineer of the airship, the current construction was 50% complete. The project could longest be finished in half a year. By that time, NAC's combat radius would increase to over 500 kilometers, and the flag of order would spread to places further.

Without staying too long outside of Camp 27, Jiang Chen met Yu Lu and Wang Zhaowu waiting for him at the gate. After he reviewed the Second Division stationed there, he followed Yu Lu to Fallout Shelter 027 located underground.

Inside the research institute, Jiang Chen found Fang Weixian who surrounded a watermelon-sized electronic device with his colleagues also in white lab coats. It must be the critical module of the quantum communication satellite, but from his twisted eyebrows, the difficulty they were facing didn't seem to be small.

Jiang Chen didn't want to disturb him, he passed the chip to the assistant in the shelter and briefly hurried on to see the development of the quantum communication device.

Without stopping longer, Jiang Chen then visited the Biology Technology Research Institute to speak with Wang Fangping and explained the purpose of his visit.

The attacker hit by Ayesha was currently under interrogation at New Moon Island. Based on the description from Ivan, this person didn't reveal any information despite the torture he received, and all wounds recovered at an incredible speed. Therefore, Jiang Chen remembered Wang Fangping in the biological engineering research with the hope to find the answer from him.

"Super regeneration ability? Without the need to use machines and medicine?" When Wang Fangping heard Jiang Chen's description, he was first shocked before his eyebrows furrowed. "There are plenty of methods to increase regeneration. The gun wounds from a sniper... there is a hidden genetic code called

Tenacious that could achieve a similar effect."

Sun Jiao's hidden genetic code was Tenacious, and Jiang Chen personally witnessed the effect of that skill. The person could get up from a pool of blood despite being shot several times in exchange for consuming life. But even then, Jiang Chen thought the ability of the attacker has nothing to do with genetic code.

Especially since there was no way genetic vaccines existed in the modern world.

"Other than genetic code, is there any other possibility?" Jiang Chen asked.

"There is another possibility... there are many. Some dangerous anatomy modifications could achieve a similar effect, but these modifications usually would cause negative consequences. Speaking of which, mutated humans seem to fit your description." Wang Fangping used a half-joking tone to explain.

Chapter 564: A Promise

Normally, no living creature could survive through interdimensional travel. A mutated human appearing in the modern world? That's absolutely impossible and Jiang Chen was certain about this point. When he heard Wang Fangping's half-joking words, he only smiled without thinking too much about it.

Although Jiang Chen didn't receive a satisfactory response from Wang Fangping, his words still provided Jiang Chen with a thought process.

The assassin may potentially be the product of genetic modification.

Jiang Chen was curious who, or which organization could use modern day's technology to modify to this point. To be able to withstand a Ghost Sniper Shot on the chest, even mutated humans would be half died. But that person could climb up, run, and the wound healed in half a day's time.

It didn't look like what humans could achieve.

"No one could lie about their body condition under the microscope. If the General wants an answer, you could bring that person into the Fallout Shelter for examination," Wang Fangping acutely observed the bothered look on Jiang Chen's face and suggested.

"That person can't get here." Jiang Chen simply replied, "Any other way?"

"Can't get here... How about this? I need 10 mL of blood, the metabolites in the blood, as well as the DNA information, should be enough to decipher the secret." Wang Fangping offered a secondary proposal.

Jiang Chen still shook his head.

"Blood... Metabolite should be okay, but DNA might be a bit

difficult."

Based on Lin Lin's observation, the interdimensional travel action's damage was not only limited to the termination of body functionality, but it would also affect the DNA of the cell. The former can be attributed to the effect of entropy subtraction on the organism, while the latter is unable to be explained by the science and technology of the 22nd century.

Seeing that method didn't work either, Wang Fangping thought in his head for a while before his eyes suddenly lit up.

"I have a plan. The smart medical chamber! If you can't bring that person over, make him lie into the smart medical chamber and use the body examination function to bring his body function information back."

Jiang Chen abruptly slapped his own forehead.

[Fu*k, how did I forget about it.] The last time after Ayesha used it, he forgot about that thing in the basement of the mansion.

Since it was not possible to bring live cells back, he could just bring the data back.

After he took the recipe for the new nutrient supply, Jiang Chen left Fallout Shelter 027. Rejected and thanked Xu Lu's invitation to have dinner there and toured the work at Camp 27 before he headed back to the Fishbone Base.

The snow piled on the road was thick and the vehicle stalled halfway in the journey.

A few NAC young men jumped out of the car and pushed out the General's vehicle from the snow pile. One person took out a toolkit and began to inspect for potential faulty issues. They were the personal guard under the direct order of the General, formed under the proposal of Han Junhua. They were the elite of the army, while not Knights, their benefits were the same as Knights. After their term, they will be officially granted the status of Knight

and follow the logistic department's decision to transfer to other positions in NAC.

Jiang Chen saw their proudness toward their identity on their faces.

The problem was due to the engine oil being frozen. Applying an anti-freezing agent solved the problem. After ten minutes in the snow, the vehicle finally started back on the road.

...

When Jiang Chen returned to the Fishbone base, it was completely dark out.

At the door of the mansion, Jiang Chen shook off the snowflakes on his body. Yao Yao in a light pink sweater timidly smile and took over the jacket from big brother's hand.

In a harmonious atmosphere, Jiang Chen and the girls completed their delicious and lively dinner.

Because he still had business to take care of in Xin, Jiang Chen didn't plan to stay long in the apocalypse. But before his return to Xin, he still had one thing to do.

To fulfill a promise.

...

He had traveled between the modern world and apocalypse countless times already, he had been used to the acute dimensional differences.

The only the thing he didn't grow accustomed to was the sun outside. While Wanghai in December was cold, it was not like the apocalypse's chill deep to the bone. The wind blowing on his face even felt somewhat graceful.

Currently, Jiang Chen's hand was being held by a beauty in sunglasses while they walked along the street in the New Age Square.

Liu Yao was a famous celebrity now and she typically wore sunglasses when she went outside. But what made Jiang Chen wonder was, he is much more famous compared to her but not a lot of people turned their heads. But Liu Yao on the other hand, because of her fashionable appearance and celebrity vibe, it attracted many envious looks directed at Jiang Chen.

[Is it because I'm not part of the sticker pack?]

Jiang Chen thought that must be the reason.

"Are you done with your business in Wanghai?"

"Pretty much, the remaining coordination work I left to the new CEO."

"Then... do you plan to go back soon?" Liu Yao pouted and shook the arm she hugged cutely.

"Mhmm. My ticket is for tomorrow night." The soft gentleness made Jiang Chen's mind drift away.

He thought about staying for a few days longer while being intoxicated in her gentleness, but virtual reality MMORPG was about to go online, he also needed to replenish the supplies at the apocalypse, he didn't have the time to spare to stay for a few days longer.

"Thank you for staying with me for so long... You must be very busy."

"I'm indeed very busy." Jiang Chen laughed without humility at all.

Liu Yao rolled her eyes, pouted her mouth, and her delicate fingers twisted the meat on his arm.

Rather than feeling pain, it was rather enjoyable; it was like being bit by a kitten.

They went into all the stores at the square. The clothes Liu Yao liked, Jiang Chen swiped his card without looking at the price.

Since the trial of zeros in his card was enough to buy the building.

The salesperson was ecstatic at the way they swept through the store as she wished it was her that stood beside him. But when she saw the appearance and figure of his female companion, realizing the gap, she immediately gave up on the unrealistic idea.

After they stuffed the clothes into the car, they went to the theater and finished watching the movie Liu Yao acted in.

Jiang Chen promised to her before after the film was released, he will watch the movie with her like they were a couple. The reason why he stayed after taking care of the business in Wanghai was to fulfill the promise he made.

The credits began to play on the screen, Jiang Chen smiled while watching the crowded theater. He gently squeezed Liu Yao's hand and whispered into her ear.

"The last time we watched this you were sitting on my legs, this time you're holding my hand. We watched this movie twice."

Liu Yao understood the tease in Jiang Chen's voice, she remembered the time he picked her up and her face instantly turned red. She scoffed him in a quiet voice, "Pervert..."

Liu Haotian at the seat in the back rolled his eyes so many times while watching them flirt.

How lonely does one have to be to watch a movie alone? The two couples who sat beside him looked at him with a peculiar expression so many times. But because of his "work needs", not only did he need to follow them; he had to watch them which were beyond the definition of lonely.

The people at the top viewed Jiang Chen's safety as a top concern especially after an unknown force attempted an assassination. It related to their international image and they must ensure nothing happens to him while in the country. Because of this, while Liu Haotian accompanied him for the business investment

opportunity, another task he had on this trip was to protect him.

While on the surface only he followed them, around the theater, at least ten General Staff Department agents followed them. Once any situation occurred or is about to occur, the experienced anti-terrorist experts will be able to stop any attackers who dared to step foot here...

Because of this, Jiang Chen who planned to lure the rat out felt rather helpless.

It was his last two days and no attacker appeared, the opponent seemed to have forgotten about this.

When they came out of the theater, they grabbed dinner at a high-end restaurant. Her vivid red lips bit on the straw and Liu Yao carefully observed Jiang Chen's face. She suddenly asked.

"What are you looking at?"

"A beautiful girl."

"You're lying."

"..." Jiang Chen replied with a helpless look.

"Is it not convenient to tell me?"

"Whatever, it is nothing that must be kept a secret," Jiang Chen sighed, spun the fork in his hand, "someone plans to assassinate me."

A wary expression appeared on Liu Yao's face.

"Are you scared?" Jiang Chen teased.

For some reason, Liu Yao pouted with jealousy in her voice.

"I'm not scared. Since I'm only your mistress, after all, they at least should pick someone with higher value if they want to kidnap me?"

"Oh? What if they are my enemy?" Jiang Chen smirked, "the type that doesn't seek any gains and only wants to see me suffer?"

"If anything happens to me, will you feel agony?" Liu Yao asked abruptly.

Jiang Chen paused and forced a smile.

"Why would you ask this?"

Although he didn't directly answer the question, the hesitation in his eyes told Liu Yao the answer she wanted to hear as a smile emerged on her face.

"What are you smiling at?"

"Nothing, I just think that when you're not straightforward, you're surprisingly cute."

"... Isn't this something a man should tell a woman?"

With how animated Liu Yao looked, Jiang Chen found it quite funny. He once again shifted his thoughts to the previous topic. He didn't speak for a while before he suddenly asked.

"Oh, now that you're a celebrity... It is not safe for you to live alone, why don't I arrange a bodyguard for you?... What are you laughing at."

"Nothing, I just feel really happy." She was happy about something Jiang Chen didn't understand as the curvature on her mouth turned into a crescent moon.

Jiang Chen suddenly found that the way she laughed was surprisingly beautiful.

Chapter 565: Kurofune

The evening of next day, Liu Yao drove Jiang Chen to Wanghai airport.

She kissed Jiang Chen in the departure hall, waved her hand to say goodbye hidden under her sunglasses, and watched his flight depart.

At the same time, seeing Jiang Chen finally leave, Liu Haotian who stood outside of the airport finally felt relieved.

Now that he finally sent away him, he could go back to Shangjing. The weather in the south was damp and cold. While the temperature was higher compared to the north, it was chilling to the bone which made him as a northerner extremely uncomfortable. And he had been worried about Jiang Chen's safety for the past few days.

But fortunately, no incidents occurred in the past few days. Perhaps the attackers sensed the agents surrounding Jiang Chen, so they chose to retreat knowing the impossibility of the attack succeeding.

Liu Haotian took out his phone and called his home in Shangjing.

"Target has boarded... This guy is finally gone."

"Did anything happen?" A shrewd voice came from the other side of the phone.

"No. All is clear. The escaped assassin has made no new moves and will probably remain hidden," Liu Haotian watched the flight that disappeared into the night sky and replied.

Sitting on the plane, Jiang Chen watched the city fading away until the light sparkles disappeared from his sight before he retracted his sight.

"Dear our valued customers. Thank you for boarding Han Eastern

Airline Flight MU771 heading to Xin Coro City from Han Wanghai. The flight distance of this flight is 3261 kilometers with an estimated flight duration of 5 hours and 47 minutes. To ensure the airplane's communication system is functioning correctly, please do not use large electronics during departure and landing. Cellular functions must remain off..."

"We hope you enjoy your flight."

Boarding a flight was different from taking a train, at least with a train he could browse the internet on his phone. Right now, Jiang Chen without the habit of reading newspapers or a book could only look at the beauties to kill time.

Needless to say, the flight attendants on international flights were high quality. This point not only reflected on their gorgeous looks, but their courteous attitude also made it impossible for people to feel repulsive. Of course, perhaps it had to do with being in the first class cabin.

The traveler who sat beside him with a hat on asked for a newspaper from the flight attendant, Jiang Chen only briefly scanned the flight attendant in close distance before giving a rating of 8/10. The traveler took over the newspaper, perhaps noticed Jiang Chen's sight, gave him a friendly smile before he leaned into his chair.

Jiang Chen noticed that he was flipping through the economics section.

Reality soon proved that despite how gorgeous the girl was, it would be boring after a while.

Jiang Chen yawned, took out his phone in flight mode to check the time.

9:00

The plane already departed for over an hour. Jiang Chen roughly estimated that the plane should have passed by Taipei and into

above the Pacific area.

It was getting fairly late, Jiang Chen adjusted into a more comfortable position and planned to nap for a bit. Before he closed his eyes, he glanced at the traveler beside him with the corner of his eye and noticed that he was still flipping through the newspaper.

"Are you planning to sleep? The journey is still long; do you not plan to chat with me to kill some time?" The man looked at his newspaper and said quietly.

Jiang Chen opened his eyes, smiled, and used a quiet voice that would not disturb people.

"Oh? What do you want to chat about?"

"Let me first introduce myself, my name is Tanaka Yoshihiro, biologist, and astronomer."

"Are you from Nippon?" Jiang Chen raised his eyebrows in surprise.

With how fluent his Chinese was, Jiang Chen thought he was a Han.

"Mr. Jiang seems to be surprised?"

"I'm indeed surprised, your Han skill is great... You know me?"

"Mhmm." Tanaka opened the newspaper and used his slim finger to point at a black and white picture on the headline, "This is the picture on the Phantom launch event, and currently the clearest picture published in the media."

Perhaps because of habits after years of work, his voice was mixed with a tone of academic rigidness. The best way to describe it was that a sentence that should be said in a light mood became narrative without any emotion.

"You're very observant." Jiang Chen nonchalantly said.

"Observation is the foundation to science." Tanaka closed the

newspaper, folded it, and folded it again.

"This is?" Jiang Chen furrowed while looking at the scientist's action, he didn't know what he was trying to express.

The wrinkled fingers while like on the strings of a puppet, folded the newspaper into an odd-shaped paper boat. He placed the paper boat on the armrest between them and gently said, "Kurofune. Did Mr. Jiang knows about this word?"

"Origami?" Jiang Chen crossed his legs and joked.

"You really should study world history." Tanaka slightly adjusted the hat on this head and sighed, his fingers crossed in front of his knee, tilted his head and thought for a brief moment before he said, "The six years of Jiayong era, the UA Navy Brigadier General Matthew Perry's fleet sailed into the river basin in Jianghu river. With him was the UA President Millard Fillmore's letter to the Edo shogun expressing respect, and finally, the two sides signed a pro-treaty next year declaring peace, this event is known as the kurofune incident."

"Are you planning to talk about history with me? I'm sorry, but I'm not interested" Jiang Chen already recollected the description to this history on his elementary school textbook. But understanding is one thing, being interested is another.

"No, I just hope you can understand the background to the story. And I want to hear your opinion on the Kurofune incident without any superficial patriotism."

"Your Opium War?"

Tanaka shook his head with a smile, "While still superficial, it is not far away."

"Oh? What's your view then?"

His dried lips moved, and Tanaka said in a quiet tone. "The fusion of civilization."

When Jiang Chen heard the word civilization, he pupils were mixed subconsciously with a hint of alertness.

But Tanaka didn't seem to notice Jiang Chen's reaction as he continued, "In the clash of the advanced civilization and outdated civilization, one would receive prosperity while the other evolve in agony or vanish. Just like history, the process may be painful, but to the result, it would be the evolution of the entire civilization."

He paused and pointed out one finger with a smile without changing the unfitting rigid tone, "If we expand our sight to the scale of the universe, don't you want to see the clash of the advanced civilization and the outdated civilization."

"Only lunatics want to see that." Jiang Chen narrowed his eyes dangerously.

"That's unfortunate then." Tanaka sighed, sat up straight, and extended his hand to Jiang Chen. "I'll reintroduce myself, Tanaka Yoshihiro, you can also call me as professor."

Jiang Chen didn't shake his hands. Instead, he locked onto his eyes.

"What exactly do you want?"

Without answering Jiang Chen's question, Tanaka put his hand away and spoke emotionlessly.

"Speed of 0.85 Mach, a height of 9100 meters. If I guessed correctly, you can't use your interdimensional travel ability here. Of course, you can try to travel to that side while maintaining subsonic speed and see if you will crash against the wall or not."

Jiang Chen was stunned when he heard his words.

[This is impossible!]

[How does he know my trump card?!]

Suddenly, the queen that declared war on him suddenly surfaced in his mind.

Could it be...?

"Right, you ask what you want." Tanaka smiled.

"To put it simply, your ability is too problematic for Kurofune. So, to welcome the next era..." With his hand on the edge of his hat, the cloudy eyes locked onto Jiang Chen's pupils like a viper, "please bring your trump card into the grave."

Chapter 566: Bring your trump card into the grave

The instant Tanaka took off his hat, his hat smashed into the back of the chair in front of him.

Jiang Chen, who was about to react, was completely bewildered by the scene. Jiang Chen previously thought the person would bring out some destructive weapon and he was more than prepared to defend himself. But before he could do anything, Tanaka, who took off his hat, became unconscious.

The passenger in the front, who was sleeping, sensed his chair being bumped. He turned around and gave a hard stare at Tanaka. But Tanaka didn't raise his head as he seemed to have lost all senses.

The flight attendant in the first class cabin noticed this and immediately moved to Jiang Chen. When she saw Tanaka's head leaning against the back of the chair, she kneeled down and put her face closer.

"Sir, do you not feel well? Sir? Sir!"

Seeing that he had no reaction, the flight attendant kneeled down. She immediately became nervous and wanted to help him up.

"Don't touch him!" Jiang Chen was alarmed and squeezed the hand of the flight attendant reaching for Tanaka.

From the last assassination attempt, these people didn't look like people who would avoid harming the innocent. Especially since they were on a transportation device like a plane, what would be the most effective? With a doubt, a bomb was the best option.

"Sir?" The flight attendant looked at Jiang Chen in shock. She didn't know how to react when this stranger held her hand.

Other sleeping travelers were woken up by the commotion on this side. The two other flight attendants in the front and back noticed the disruption and approached them.

Jiang Chen didn't provide any explanation for the shocked flight attendant. He just locked his eyes on Tanaka with his head spinning rapidly.

The two other flight attendants looked completely lost at Jiang Chen, who was holding onto the hand of their colleague. They then redirected their gaze to the man with his unmoving head against the back of the chair; they were unsure what to do. The other travelers were all looking in their direction.

Then the door in front of the first class cabin opened and a man with a captain's hat walked into the cabin and looked in Jiang Chen's direction.

"What happened?"

Jiang Chen released the flight attendant's hand. The flight attendant sadly rubbed her hand that had turned red while Jiang Chen pointed at the man beside him and mouthed the word "bomb" without making a sound.

The captain read Jiang Chen's lips and his eyes immediately turned stern while his gaze shifted between Jiang Chen and the man.

Jiang Chen could read from his eyes the obvious suspicion and hesitation involved in taking a risk.

It was normal to hesitate because anyone randomly pointing at an unconscious traveler, stating he had a bomb would suspicion. The traveler could have some sudden onset of a disease-related symptom, and if he wasn't treated in a timely manner...

Even Jiang Chen was wondering if the person had anything hidden on him...

"Captain?" The flight attendant looked at the captain anxiously.

"Get little Cao here." The captain turned and whispered to the flight attendant.

The flight attendant nodded and immediately ran out of the first class cabin. Not long after, a man between twenty and thirty walked into the first class cabin. His appearance looked like any other ordinary passenger, but from the sharpness in his eyes, Jiang Chen acutely sensed his identity might be different.

From the beginning of October 2004, all flights from Hua had a seat unsold. This seat was specifically reserved for undercover police. The undercover cops typically had a special forces background. Not only did they have abilities in close combat, but they also possessed a wealth of experience in deactivating bombs. When the security on the flight couldn't take care of an unsuspecting situation, the undercover cops would solve the problem.

Typically, they would solve hijacking or bomb problems on board...

When the undercover cop walked beside Jiang Chen, he immediately sensed something was wrong.

Without hesitation, the undercover cop kneeled down beside the person and instructed the flight attendant on the side to open his toolkit. He took out some equipment and began to work on the person.

Jiang Chen, who was sitting beside the person, noticed a drop of sweat rolling down his forehead and splashing onto the red carpet.

"What's the situation like..." Seeing that little Cao wasn't saying anything, the captain also began to feel nervous.

He had been a captain for over five years and had been in countless anti-terrorism drills, but it was his first time encountering something like this in real life.

Little Cao gritted his teeth, stood up, and whispered to the

captain: "The person is dead; the cause of death is unknown. I found a countdown device on his body and I'm uncertain what it is... evacuate everybody first."

Then he looked at Jiang Chen and warned him, "Don't move. I'm uncertain if there are any detonation devices around you."

Jiang Chen opened his hands to indicate his understanding, but when he heard from their whispers that Professor Tanaka already died, he was caught off-guard.

From the words of Tanaka, he clearly knew a lot of information. The more he knew, the higher his status was in the organization. It would've been a terrible plan to trade one life for one.

He sensed something was off.

Just then, he suddenly remembered that before Tanaka lost consciousness, he seemed to have made a move...

Jiang Chen's gaze stopped on the hat on the ground.

Jiang Chen picked it up and touched the linen material. He seemed to have detected a metal object hidden in the material.

The captain started to instruct flight attendants to evacuate the first class cabin passengers.

The passengers in the first class cabin started to understand the situation and began to feel anxious. The people who could afford first class were either important or rich. The richer the person, the more fearful they were of death... Of course, Jiang Chen was an exception. Although he had money, he didn't think he would die.

Supplemented with Tanaka's comments, he could piece together what happened.

Kurofune... The Kurofune he referred to should be the Nature Selection sent by the Harmony to Earth. Regarding the civilization fusion he referred to, his understanding of the Natural Selection must not be limited to knowing its existence.

For some reason, the organization led by Tanaka received an electromagnetic wave or Klein particle wave from the Natural Selection; they were subsequently manipulated or even brainwashed to become "followers" of the Harmony.

After the conclusion of his conversation with the Queen, Jiang Chen already knew the Queen was aware of his ability to engage in interdimensional travel and even knew about his secret storage dimension.

But what still confused Jiang Chen was that until now, they hadn't displayed any desire to kill. It wasn't difficult to understand - just like humans' perception of bugs, crushing them or not wouldn't be linked to the concept of killing, especially since they still wanted to capture him to help them return to their "home planet."

What made the Harmony change their opinion and desperately want him dead?

Jiang Chen fell into deep thought.

While the undercover cop disarmed the bomb, the captain returned to the cockpit. He needed to send a request to the nearest airport to make an emergency landing. The passengers were evacuated; only three people remained in the first class cabin.

They were Jiang Chen, little Cao, and the flight attendant.

Considering how collected Jiang Chen looked, while the flight attendant was anxious, she was curious at the same time. Typically, it should be her who comforted passengers with unstable emotions, but this passenger was special - he didn't seem to be bothered by the bomb beside him at all.

"Aren't you afraid?" The flight attendant gulped and asked in a quiet voice.

"What's there to be scared of?" Jiang Chen smiled.

"Since it's right beside you..."

"If it really is a bomb, it makes no difference where I sit."

Only the timing of death would be different.

"Threat deactivated."

Following a trail of sweat splashing onto the ground, the countdown timer strapped around Tanaka's waist was stopped. Little Cao felt relieved. He accepted the napkin offered by the flight attendant to wipe the sweat off his face.

Just in a short period of time, his entire body was drenched.

"The bomb is disarmed?" Jiang Chen was surprised.

It was deactivated this easily? Jiang Chen didn't feel any better about surviving through it all with how easily the threat was eliminated.

"There was no bomb at all... At least nothing I haven't seen before." Little Cao spoke while carefully cutting open Tanaka's jacket and he took out a vest with mysterious hanging plastic balls.

The transparent plastic balls were connected together by soft strings. Under the bright light in the cabin, they looked crystal clear.

"At least treat this as a dangerous good for now... Threat is eliminated."

Just as little Cao was speaking, the body of the plane shook violently as if it had been hit by something.

"Ahh-"

The flight attendant screamed and was flipped to the ground by the shaking body of the plane. Little Cao also tumbled, but as a special forces agent, he held onto what seemed to be the dangerous vest with one hand while holding onto the seat beside him with the other.

"Fu*k! What's going on?!" The dangerous item in his hand almost flew out and almost scared Little Cao to death; he cursed after

regaining his footing.

Jiang Chen, who had his seatbelt on, didn't feel too much although the violent shaking did catch him off-guard.

It was normal for the body of the plane to shake when encountering air turbulence, but the continuously trembling of the cabinet made it feel odd.

It clearly wasn't turbulence - it felt like something struck the plane.

Just then, Jiang Chen looked out the window and was stunned.

The turbine engine was burning in fire!

Chapter 567: Mayday

North of Country F's Masa Island, a boat quietly drifted on the surface of the west Pacific Ocean.

Standing on top of the boat, a man with a hat lowered the smoking rocket launcher on his shoulder and stared at the falling ball of flame. A curvature appeared on his mouth.

In Hua, with the General Staff Department agents watching, they had no opportunities to attack at all. And with the security screening at Hua airports, they had no possibility of bringing explosives onto planes. From the beginning, they never planned to take out Jiang Chen on a plane.

The rocket launcher was only suitable against low air targets; it would be impossible to take down a commercial airline ten thousand meters in the air. In order to use the rocket launcher to take down targets, they had to make them "obediently" lower their height.

They would use bombs to force the plane to descend and force it to fly toward the nearby the airport. Once it reached the range of the rocket launcher, they would take it down.

Based on the calculation of the flight map, it was the best shooting spot Tanaka calculated.

Whether the method was too cruel, or if it would hurt innocents were never questions of their concern.

"What beautiful fireworks. Not bad, not bad. Professor will be happy when he sees it." Tanaka threw the improved "Spike" Rocket Launcher onto the deck and watched the "meteor" dragging a trail of flame disappearing in the distance.

"The rocket launcher struck the left engine... It only has a 70% crash chance." Ladisiv put down the binoculars in his hand while he leaned against the door to the deck. "You sure the Professor will

be happy?"

"Of course." Tanaka smiled. "But this is very problematic. If we don't win the gambit on the 30%, Professor will be very bothered. Mr. Ladisiv, please."

He never told his subordinates that he was that professor. He had always been referring to himself as the assistant. There were many more people who wanted the life of that professor instead of the life of Jiang Chen.

Ladisiv glanced at him, took out a cigarette from his pocket, and lit it up.

"You guys are acting more and more like lunatics; are you not afraid of associating your name with Al Qaeda and IS? City S is the second biggest city of Country F; you think F's army is only there for show?"

"Country F's army is currently in a war with Moro. There are plenty of opportunities to take advantage of this situation. Although I've prepared for some interesting things on the plane, just in case, I have to ask you to please make a personal run. Don't worry, extras missions will provide extra bonuses." Tanaka grinned.

"Interesting things?" Ladisiv's expression changed.

He was unsure what Tanaka had to offer, but he heard the company was currently researching a chemical weapon.

"I said, Mr. Ladisiv, this is a war. A war." Tanaka put up one finger, shook it, and adjusted his hat. "Although it is a half-finished product, let me use this opportunity to see its effect. Hahaha..."

....

The dry but presumptuous laugh drifted on the empty ocean surface and vanished among the crashing waves.

Ladisiv quietly blew out a ring of smoke and gazed out at the

white smoke.

"I need people, equipment, and a helicopter."

Tanaka stopped laughing and faced his partner with his arms open.

"They're all ready for you."

...

In the air traffic control center of Country F, an unusual red dot appeared on its radar. Flight MU 771 with its destination set as Xin's Coro Island drifted away from its intended flight path and entered Country F's airspace. When they discovered this oddity, the air traffic controller immediately contacted the flight crew.

Control tower: "This is the Control Tower, MU 771. You have entered our air control zone. The communication frequency is 132.6—"

Flight crew: "This is flight MU 771. Our left engine is on fire! We were struck by a rocket. Requesting emergency landing!"

Control tower: "What?"

Flight crew: "I repeat, a rocket struck our left engine! We require assistance!"

Control tower: "Please remain calm. City S Flight Control Tower will provide a landing runway for you. Please follow our instructions..."

[Struck by a rocket?!]

The people in the air traffic control center immediately became worried and called Country F's Presidential Palace then called military headquarters. The air force commander just got into bed with his wife before he was called out by a phone call from Aquino.

"Flight MU 771 was struck by a rocket! I need an explanation!" The moment the call went through, Aquino's roar followed the phone line right to Edgar's head.

"I-I don't know, but I promise, it was not our people! What happened? What flight and rocket..." Edgar completely lost all composure.

Aquino was breathing heavily.

"MU 771 was truck near our airspace. The left engine is on fire. It's currently heading to Suf Airport."

Edgar's first reaction was that it must be a joke. He peeked at the calendar before his expression instantly changed.

Today wasn't April Fools

"Must've been Moro that did it!"

"Bullsh*t! Their rocket launcher could strike down a commercial plane ten thousand meters above the air?!" Aquino heard this brain-dead comment from his subordinate and instantly turned furious.

The firearms of Moro's guerrillas couldn't reach the height of a commercial plane. That was the reason why UA's fighter jets could provide support without feeling pressured at all. Only F had the capability to bring down a plane in that ocean space, and once that realization gained traction, F's international image would be completely done for...

Realizing the severity of the situation, Edgar immediately rushed out the door to the headquarters while calling his subordinates and sending out orders.

Mila military base. Two FA-50s came out and approached the direction of flight MU 771.

When the two FA-50s reached the commercial plane, the pilots of the fighter jets immediately felt anxious for the passengers after witnessing the tragedy on the plane.

The entire left wing of the plane was engulfed by thick black smoke. Through the thick smoke, the unextinguished flame was

still visible.

Needless to say, with the damage this severe, it was already a miracle that they could maintain a gliding position to the airport.

MU 771's captain and first officer were still attempting the last struggle. They prayed the wing wouldn't break while desperately trying to regain control over the plane starting to lose control.

"No! This is it, we won't make it to the airport!" The first officer locked onto the instruments and shouted out in despair.

"Hold on, we can do it! We have to make it to the airport!"

"Damn it, the right wing is damaged! The engine malfunctioned! Fu*k, start moving for me—" The captain repeatedly tried to restart the engine but it was futile.

MU 771 turned into a fireball.

All members of the flight crew had despair on their faces. After experiencing the initial outcry, the passengers began to write their last words on their clothes and notebooks. Jiang Chen, witnessing this hellish scene, couldn't bear what he just saw, but he ultimately took a deep breath and calmed down.

He knew he couldn't save everyone.

He muttered "I will avenge you all" then he stood up and walked in the direction of the lavatory.

"Where are you going?" The flight attendant saw Jiang Chen unbuckling his seatbelt, so she stood up from her seat and asked him.

"Going to the washroom." Jiang Chen ignored her and walked away.

At the same time, inside the cockpit, the captain, who exhausted all his efforts, put his hands down.

"This is the City S' air traffic controller, MU 771, location 32R. Runway is clear for landing, please—"

"This is MU 771, we are unable to land. Please tell my family I love them."

A ball of thick smoke slashed through City S night and crashed toward MLL Island's northwest Harbor K...

Chapter 568: Hell and the People in Hell

Inside the Wanghai hotel, Liu Haotian was packing up.

After he sent Jiang Chen on the plane, his mission in Wanghai was considered done. He still had a train to catch tomorrow morning, so he planned to pack up before he went to sleep. Just then, his phone on the nightstand began to ring.

It was a number he didn't recognize. He thought it was an escort service or advertisement at first, but he became dumbfounded once he picked up.

It was the General Staff Department responsible for Jiang Chen's safety in Hua.

"The flight crashed?!"

When he heard the message on the other side of the phone, Liu Haotian almost dropped his phone to the ground.

He couldn't imagine that after being on the plane for two hours, such a serious incident occurred to Jiang Chen!

"It's information passed from Wanghai's flight control tower. Country F contacted us already and transmitted the location where the plane experienced the problem. The original plan was to make an emergency landing at City S's International Airport, but the plane lost power at around 2000 meters in the air, lost the opportunity to land, and crashed into City K."

Liu Haotian gulped and squeezed the words out.

"What was the cause of the crash?"

"It was suspected to be a direct strike by a rocket."

"Rocket? Could it be Country F—"

"It's currently undetermined, but Country F is highly suspicious. Based on the location where the flight deviated away from the intended flight path and height, only Country F has the capability

to strike that plane. And based on the recent tension between Xin and Country F, they did have the motive to do this... although I don't think they would be foolish enough to do this. The exact cause of this incident still has to be determined by the information in the black box—"

"I don't care about the black box. What about the people on the plane?!" Liu Haotian interrupted.

Jiang Chen and the Liu family had a cooperation agreement. If anything happened to Jiang Chen, Liu family's interests would be affected

...

"Based on the information provided by Country F, due to the height and speed of the crash, the chance of survival is extremely slim..."

Liu Haotian hung up the phone and collapsed on the bed.

His hand holding the phone couldn't stop trembling.

This wasn't good.

Hua and F's diplomatic relationship hadn't been the best; it would be difficult to confirm Jiang Chen's safety. Although he was only working in the concierge department to get some experience, he had been working diligently. If he remembered correctly, the city of Kejan was on MLL Island, and that place seemed to be in the middle of a civil war...

Wait, Moro.

Liu Haotian's eyes lit up.

He immediately slid open his screen and called the Xin Embassy.

...

The flame lit up the night sky like a meteor that broke through the night; it disrupted the sweet dreams of every City K resident. The explosion was clearly visible even several kilometers out,

which made people think it was the bombardment by guerrillas.

At the last moment, the captain still couldn't restart the stalled engine. The plane was forced to make a hard landing in the middle of City K.

The head of the plane came into intimate contact at a 30-degree angle with the road. Metal shards and concrete debris were instantly created and exploded. The airplane slid on the road at a horrifying speed, and the cars on the street were shredded in the air force generated by the wings of the airplane. Like a sharp blade, they sliced into the buildings on two sides. After shredding through two walls, the two wings finally clipped off.

The body of the plane was dismembered into several pieces, and the head of the plane began to drift away.

People screamed, cried, and fled to avoid the flying shards in addition to searching for their family among the shambles.

Like a pierced bloody bag, flowing blood, along with jet fuel, left a trail of blood and fire on the destroyed road.

It was like hell.

When the tragedy occurred, the pain of the victims would only last an instant, but the pain of the living would last forever.

Both spiritually or physically...

The vest held by little Cao had long been shredded to pieces when the plane crashed along with him. The remains were blown outside the plane by turbulent airflows. Countless plastic balls smashed and splattered on the street. The second the colorless liquid came into contact with air, it turned dark green and vanished at a speed visible to the naked eye.

At the scene of the crash, in the middle of the shambles:

A man used his bloody hands to dig through the debris and hugged his wife on her last breath in agony.

"Liya, wake up, you'll be okay. I'll take you to an ambulance. Hold on—"

But suddenly, his expression froze.

The woman in his arms bit into his shoulder. Her teeth pierced his flesh; her bloodshot pupils had no life in them at all and cast a horrifying hollowness.

The man forgot how to speak until an entire piece of flesh was ripped off by the person in his arms.

"AHHH—"

The horrific scream echoed throughout the street. The man subconsciously wanted to throw away the love of his life, but her nails stained red either by blood or nail polish were already deeply embedded in his back. The woman entangled herself around him like an octopus, suppressed him, and chewed on his flesh without sanity. The man's clenched fists gradually loosened and his screams of agony stopped along with his breath.

Seeing that her prey was no longer moving, the woman stood up while shaking. Her lifeless pupils began to search for her next target.

The man being preyed down gradually stood up from the ground. His pupils also cast the same daunting hollowness.

Ladisiv carried an assault rifle covered in camouflage. His eyes watched for any danger that could dart out from the darkness. When he saw this bloody moment, he couldn't help but furrow his eyebrows, even as a war-tested veteran.

"This is absolute hell."

"I agree with your perspective." Giles, who was walking beside him, lifted the assault rifle on his arm with a casual expression.

Dressed in urban camouflage uniforms, fifteen militants with an unknown identity walked onto the empty street. The guerrillas

used the disruption of the plane crash to launch a full-scale attack on Kejan. The sound of destruction in the distance covered the agony on the street.

Fire began to spread out from a corner of the city, but there were no firefighters or paramedics to be seen. All firetrucks and ambulances had been acquired by the government; some durable personal SUVs were even confiscated by the army and attached with machine guns.

It was the last harbor of the Country F government on MLL Island; if they lost it, that would mean the fire of civil war would spread over the sea to the prosperous City S. To protect the prosperity of this place, the 13th Infantry Division was stationed here and swore to all the people of Country F that they would do their duty, even if they were down to the last soldier.

"With a fall like this, would that person still be alive?" Lasidiv glanced at the airplane seat burned to the ground.

"In theory, no, but no one can determine if that person had any other trump cards. It's better to take a look. Also, did you eat that pill?" Giles asked nonchalantly.

"It was mint-flavored," Ladisiv said.

Giles took a second to process before he started to laugh.

"That's right, mint-flavored."

"If I may ask, what if someone didn't eat that pill?"

"That would be problematic." Giles sighed, suddenly engaged in firing mode. He aimed at the civilian tumbling toward them. "You would become like them."

He simultaneously pressed the trigger at the blank face.

Chapter 569: Resident Evil?

[Damage Percentage: 65%]

[Draining nutrient fluid...]

500 meters from the spot where the plane crashed, a "metal coffin" stood tall among the debris. After five minutes of silence, a faint electric static noise began to buzz and the hatch door to the hibernation chamber began to open, followed by the sound of gas leaking.

"Ahem." puke

Jiang Chen tumbled out from the hibernation chamber while one of his arms pressed against the half-destroyed wall. He dry-puked on the ground.

Before the plane crashed, Jiang Chen, who realized the impending doom, immediately walked into the lavatory. After he locked the door, he took out the virtual reality hibernation chamber stored in the storage dimension. While it should've technically been connected to the virtual reality network, due to the quality standards of PAC, it could also be used as a temporary shelter. When nutrient fluid filled the inside of the hibernation chamber, its potential to allow the user to survive a crash was better than power armor.

He used GPS to confirm that the plane would land in the city then Jiang Chen installed a timed bomb on the wall of the lavatory before stepping into the hibernation chamber. The second he entered the hibernation chamber, the bomb blew open the wall of the plane and the turbulent airflow took the entire hibernation chamber out of the body of the plane.

But what Jiang Chen didn't think about was the "user experience" of the hard landing; he didn't realize it would be so painful. Although the function of the hibernation chamber included shock

resistance and floatation, a drop from a hundred meters up was not considered in the design.

Jiang Chen rested for a while, leaning against the wall. After a deep breath, he stood up and began to observe the environment around him.

The half-collapsed buildings didn't look like the aftermath of the plane crash but more like damage from missiles and shells. Taken into consideration with the yellow lines in the surrounding area and the situation around MLL Island, this should be the hotspot between the government forces and the guerrillas.

Fires sparked in the distance. Judging by the body of the plane severed into several pieces, the passengers inside probably didn't make it.

"Then... I'll have to make contact with the guerrillas to leave the territory. But as the only survivor, it's going to be quite problematic..." Jiang Chen let out a sigh, put the hibernation chamber back into the storage dimension, crossed an exposed reinforced steel beam, and walked onto the street.

For some reason, the street was terrifyingly silent.

In the unusual quietness, Jiang Chen sensed something was abnormal.

"There's no ambulance even after an event this serious?"

Jiang Chen furrowed his brows, took out his phone, and called Ayesha's number.

"The user you have dialed is not in service or has turned off their phone..."

Jiang Chen hung up and glanced at the top left corner of the phone.

[No signal?]

Normal cell phone calls were transmitted through the signal base

station and signal cable. For international long distance calls, a submarine cable would be added to the process. Only a dedicated satellite phone (such as the American Iridium phone) could make a phone call via satellite.

If a phone call couldn't be made, there could only be two reasons.

Either the plane destroyed the antenna to all the signal base stations or F voluntarily shut down all the signal base stations in the City K.

The former was obviously impossible, so the latter was the only possibility.

"Shut down the signal base station? But why?" Jiang Chen put away his phone and began to contemplate.

If a phone call couldn't be made because of an accident, that would be understandable. But what if F shut down all the signal base stations? That was worth pondering.

[Blockading communication after the air disaster - did they not want to rescue the passengers?]

[Or did something happen here that forced them to hide the truth?]

The sound of mortar firing constantly reverberated in the distance. It was evident that a battle was ongoing outside the city. With the noise in the far background, the silence on the street appeared particularly peculiar; it felt like this place wasn't a city but a grave...

"Ahhhh! Go away! Sh*t!"

A scream abruptly echoed in the street, disrupting the silence of the "graveyard."

The smell of blood drifted along with the sound of agony. Blurry figures wavered in the haziness of the flames.

Jiang Chen gulped, put his hands into his pockets, and took out a

pistol from the storage dimension.

He didn't do it because he thought he would really use it, but rather, the metallic feeling of the pistol gave him a sense of security.

The people looked slow and dumb. Their eyes were covered in blood and even ten meters away, they were clearly visible under the light of the streetlights.

Suddenly, a terrifying thought surfaced in Jiang Chen's mind.

[Could it be...]

[That's impossible!]

Although he was thinking, Jiang Chen still subconsciously took out his pistol and aimed at the civilian tumbling toward him.

"Stop."

Without any reaction, when the civilian heard Jiang Chen's voice, he sped up and bared his teeth stained red.

Without any need for clarification, only the dead were unafraid of weapons...

BANG!

The sound of the pistol broke the silence on the street.

With a bloody hole in his forehead, the zombie with a blank look collapsed onto the ground.

"What actually happened... Fu*k." Jiang Chen lowered his gun while cursing. He walked to the zombie and used a dagger to cut open the back of its neck.

Different from the zombies in the apocalypse, there was no sign of infection from the X1 virus nor was there a grain-sized crystal. By the looks of it, the infection mechanism was different.

Jiang Chen felt somewhat relieved by this result.

"Grhhh..."

Deep roars came from two ends of the street. Jiang Chen looked up and the zombies began to surround him. Inside the buildings along the street, terrifying faces were pressed against the glass windows, smudging blood all over the surface.

"Is this because of the gunshot?" Jiang Chen looked at the pistol he was holding. He muttered to himself, "Whatever, I'll retreat for now."

Then he put away his weapon and commenced traveling...

A cold gust of wind blew by, carrying along a few plastic bags.

Jiang Chen was in the same position with his left hand raised and his eyebrows awkwardly jumped.

[It was unsuccessful?]

[What's going on?]

The windows on the nearby apartment building shattered. A person covered in blood fell onto the street along with some glass shards. Falling from a height of three storeys, any normal person would've been crippled, but this person didn't look affected at all as he climbed up from the ground while aiming his bloodthirsty pupils towards the only living creature on the street – Jiang Chen.

With his hairs raised, Jiang Chen gave up on commencing interdimensional travel and he immediately took out his Reaper Assault Rifle.

The zombies crashed down onto the street like dumplings entering boiling water and swarmed toward him.

His blazing rifle shredded the zombies nearby.

With one hand holding the gun while the other wielded his laser sword, Jiang Chen slashed a zombie leaping toward him and cut his ugly face in half.

"Fu*k! What's going on?! This isn't the apocalypse!"

He kicked away another zombie and changed the mode of the

laser sword. He threw out a propelling laser blade. At the same time, he threw the laser sword back into the storage dimension, instantly taking out a new clip and replacing the emptied one.

Flesh and bullets flew in the air. He made a path through the swarming zombies and ran to the tallest apartment building nearby.

Along the way, he used his one hand to reach for a pickup truck and put it in the storage dimension. When he ran into the building, he gunned down a few zombies pursuing him then he moved the pickup truck to block the entrance of the apartment building.

The storage dimension was functional!

The zombies flooded towards him and compressed the pickup truck against the door. The massive force made the steel surface let out a painful whine, unable to withstand the massive pressure. But regardless of how hard they pushed, they couldn't enter the building.

With short breaths, Jiang Chen leaned at the entrance of the apartment building and lowered the rifle in his hand.

After a moment of rest, he grinned at the zombies outside the apartment and raised his left hand.

He stared at the engraving with the energy clearly full, and his eyebrows furrowed.

The confusion lingered in his mind.

[Why can't I use this?]

Chapter 570: Virus is spreading

Marching on the empty street, the fifteen-member-team with rifles in hand fired continuously, killing the zombies on the street. The rifles they possessed were installed with silencers and the bullets only made short and low sounds. The zombies didn't even fully comprehend the situation before being gunned down.

The scattered civilians who thought they were the F army waved their hands in search of help. But the civilians clearly didn't realize that their uniforms didn't belong to any country and the badges on their shoulders didn't distinguish their identity at all.

Zombies and civilians were all part of their kill list.

"People who don't take the 'mint' will get affected?" Ladisiv killed a civilian with his hands raised while running at him. He asked Giles with a coldblooded voice.

"Not all people will get infected. It's just like the black plague; while the mortality rate is extremely high, there will always be a few graced by lady luck who are immune to this," Giles said nonchalantly.

"What's the range of influence of this?" Ladisiv asked.

"Only 2.5L to create another dead city in this world," Giles said in a pleasant tone.

Ladisiv glanced at Giles before moving his back into the crosshairs again.

"Then it's a deadly thing."

"Just 2.5L of the poisonous liquid costs 250 million USD. Although it can spread rapidly, the virus's ability to survive outside the body is extremely weak; normal ultraviolet can kill it. Therefore, this thing can only spread at night to launch the first wave of infection. Thus, this is a half-finished product." Giles grinned.

Although it was just a half-finished product, its impact was devastating. In just one hour, it made thousands of people turn into zombies. Even people who were immune to the first round of infection would become zombies after being bitten through the more infectious method of direct contact.

Ladisiv didn't say anything more and trained his attention to the mission at hand.

Just then, they heard a faint gunshot in the distance.

"Did you hear that?" Giles stopped.

"I heard it; it sounded like a gunshot." Ladisiv signaled the team to stop.

With his eyes narrowed, watching the flames in the distance, Giles gently said, "There are two possibilities. One is that the Country F government forces already discovered the situation here, and the other possibility is that it was Jiang Chen who fired the gun."

...

"Jiang Chen? That's impossible. Even though he's a person of influence, it would've been impractical for him to bring a gun onto the plane." Ladisiv disagreed.

"He didn't need to bring it onto the plane. If it's him, it's not hard to make a gun appear out of thin air, so don't be caught off guard." Giles smiled mysteriously and continued, "You know, we are fighting against a God."

"Bullsh*t," Ladisiv responded coldly.

Giles shrugged and continued to raise his rifle.

"I know you don't believe it. Whatever, regardless of what I say, let's get to the black box first. Within three days, he won't be able to escape. Once we obtain the black box, we'll have plenty of time to play with him."

Giles spoke mysteriously as he walked in front of the squad and signaled Ladisiv to follow him.

Jiang Chen took out the kinetic skeleton from the storage dimension and equipped it then rechecked the equipment on his body.

The power armor created too big of a target and was previously exposed on Coro Island, so it wasn't suitable to be used here. If it was spotted in City K, it would be hard for people not to think about the possibilities.

For example, could this "resident evil" event be related to Xin? Or why did the power armor coincidentally appear in City K the same time the infection broke out?

On the contrary, the kinetic skeleton, which could be worn inside his clothes, was less conspicuous. The kinetic skeleton was more than enough against typical zombies.

Jiang Chen did mind Tanaka pointing out his trump card.

But considering the Harmony's perspective, they shouldn't allow other people like Jiang Chen to engage in interdimensional travel at the end of the 22nd century. If other people knew about his abilities, it would be hard to determine the final outcome.

Even if Jiang Chen said he came from the future, the media would think it was a joke.

Just like if Jiang Chen told the media that an alien colonization ship was on its way, no one would believe him either.

The fortunate thing was that Jiang Chen could confirm he possessed something that made others afraid.

And it could be the breakthrough to take down Natural Selection.

But the problem then became: what is the breakthrough point?

Jiang Chen carefully arrived on the 12th floor and opened the metal door to the roof. With the cold wind blowing in his face, he

walked to the edge of the building and narrowed his eyes.

The entire city was dead. The cold river divided the city into two worlds - the west side was bright and lively while the east side was completely dark. In the distance, signs of government forces fighting against the guerrillas could be seen.

Without confirming the cause of the plane crash, he didn't plan on contacting the government forces controlling the City K. Although the suspect that took down the plane was Tanaka who was already "dead," the only country with the ability to take down a plane at ten thousand meters in the sky was Country F.

Considering his unfriendly relationship with Country F, Jiang Chen had enough reason to suspect a connection between Tanaka and Country F.

Thanks to the darkness and war, there were few pedestrians on the street. After the unknown virus spread, there weren't a lot of zombies wandering on the street.

But even then, with a population of over one hundred thousand, it made the city particularly dangerous.

Explosions could be heard continuously in the distance. The city west of the river began to lose power simultaneously. Did the people who were fighting realize the soil they were fighting over was already a grave?

Where did the virus begin to spread?

With this question in mind, Jiang Chen took out his binoculars and began to search for this street.

Then, his gaze stopped on the crashed plane.

[Could it be... the source was on the plane?]

His pupils contracted slightly.

There were two groups of people who appeared in his field of vision.

A group of people were in F uniforms wore anti-poison masks; they looked like the local forces. They were stained with blood and a helicopter hovered nearby. They seemed to have diverging opinions regarding if they should shoot civilians in this chaos.

Finally, their captain seemed to have made up their minds for them. He raised his gun to shoot the "rioter" on the street before leading the team to the wreckage of the plane.

Another group of people in city camouflage weren't equipped with anti-poison equipment at all; they didn't have any badges that identified them either. Just from their equipment, Jiang Chen couldn't recognize their origin. But he was certain that they were neither F government forces nor the guerrillas.

Because the weapons of the guerillas were provided by him.

Compared to the hesitant government forces, this group was much more decisive. They seemed to know that the people who lost sanity were zombies. They shot any zombies who approached them without any doubt.

The government forces noticed these uninvited guests. While they raised their rifles with caution, they also shouted out to them first.

But the reaction of the second group of people was still decisive. As if the government forces were zombies, they began firing.

Chapter 571: Fragile

The most prosperous area east of the city center was filled with deafening car horns.

The not-so-wide street was congested by a long line without end. Without realizing the situation in the front and no cell phone reception, people could only use their horn and curse to express the dissatisfaction in their mind.

"Could people in the front be faster! What the fu*k are you doing!" A truck driver looked out the window and cursed at the people in the front.

The traffic didn't make any advancements. The man walked out of the car, leaned against the door to peak at the surrounding and began to chat with the driver in the car next to him.

"Sh*t, when will the traffic end?"

"Hopefully not tomorrow. Do you know what happened in the front?"

"Only God knows, there is no cell phone reception, no internet, my wife is still waiting for me at home. Fu*k, this is so unlucky, did a congestion like this ever happen here?"

"I think... no. Wait, there was a traffic jam a year ago."

"I heard a plane crashed in the east side of the city, perhaps it is because of that." Another driver joined their conversation.

"Ah ha, that was a plane? I thought it was a meteor... Regardless, please don't land in my backyard." Leaning against the car window, the truck driver muttered while cursing.

Right now, there was a violent explosion from the distance. People subconsciously ducked down before they returned to their casual conversation.

The war has lasted for half a year already and the explosion and

firing never stopped at MLL Island. They would scream in the beginning, now the most they would do was to duck down. People grow into habits; once they can't change the situation, they become accustomed to life in the war.

"The guerillas are firing again?"

"Those lunatics that don't want to live... Wait, what is that?" The man leaned against the car door and suddenly noticed the commotion on the road in front of him, he began to furrow.

Someone was racing.

No, a group of people was racing. They ran in between the vehicles, stepped onto windshields, and dove toward people.

Their face was...

Covered in blood!

Realizing something was clearly wrong, the man locked the door, took a few steps back while hesitating, and then gritted his teeth and began running at full speed. Everyone began to run to avoid the lunatic that bit anyone he saw.

There were waves of screams and the congested road turned into a complete mess. The drivers reluctant to leave their car either curled up or stepped down on the gas. While a lot of people saw Resident Evil before, when everything became a reality, their first reaction was being clueless.

Are they really zombies?

Are they died or alive?

Once they exhibited similar hesitation, only death awaits.

The truck driver anxiously closed the car window, but the half opened window was stuck by a hand reaching in.

While he cursed out, he turned his steering wheel while smashing the bloody hand. At the same time, he pressed on the gas.

The truck demolished the BMW in the front and pushed it forward two meters without being able to move a inch further.

The driver's face was pale white. Only now did he realize how stupid of a decision he made to stay in the car with a bunch of bloodthirsty people leaping toward him.

The lunatics with blood on their faces already surrounded him.

The driver put the steering wheel in front of his chest, watched the windshield slowly crack, and his pants began to be stained with a yellow liquid.

And then, he used the corner of his eye to see that the taxi driver just chatting with him was dragged out from the broken windshield. He was crying and shouting the name of God and his daughter, then his neck was bitten off by the zombie...

...

The City K, a row of police cars lined the bridge that spanned across the river. Police with shields guarded in front of the blockade while attempting to stop the crowd from passing the river.

The east side of the city had completely lost the cellular and electricity grid, but because the police used the city line, the control system was not in chaos, only everyone's brain was in chaos.

Compared to the civilian who knew nothing, they acquired firsthand information from the front line.

The crashed plane carried an unknown virus and the status of the infected was unknown. The known symptom was that the infected would turn insane and attack any non-infected target. The entire east side of the city was covered under the gloom of the virus. To prevent the virus from spreading to the west, they established temporary inspection stations on the bridges that spanned the river.

Of course, the police force at the front line didn't know the truth behind it.

The only order they received was to block this bridge and prevent anyone from passing through. And the riot that happened in east side of the city was the action of the rioters. To prevent rioters from mixing with the crowd and entering the west side of the city, they were ordered to block any passage to the west before the security force took control of the situation.

But their superior didn't precisely tell them how to take care of the situation.

This included if they should fire against zombies?

Fire? They are all civilians, even if their brain was poisoned by the virus, they could still move, that meant they are not died! Against unarmed civilians and firing at their own citizens, who could bear the consequence! Especially what if they discovered a better problem solving solution after the fact? Such as an antidote.

What kind of consequence it would cause was no longer important.

Anyone ordering to shoot must face persecution after the incident, and could even bear the name of "butcher" for hundreds of years.

Not firing? Tear gas and baton were useless against the lunatics. Even if the trained soldiers could use force to take down a few zombies, against a swarm of zombies, personal strength was ineffective.

No one wanted to take responsibility, everyone knew what to do, but no one wanted to be the person ordering.

When crisis arrived, management still had an attitude of shifting and deflecting responsibility, perfectly demonstrating the lack of decisiveness in crisis management.

This point was already demonstrated by several typhoon events.

"Why won't you let us cross the bridge! There is a riot there! You're not there to stop them and you're here to stop us from escaping!" The man smashed the shield with his fist while roaring in anger.

Riot was the official explanation given to the virus.

To prevent unnecessary panic, it was a necessary lie.

The reporters with cameras used satellite stations to broadcast the chaotic scene.

"I'm currently in City K. Tonight at 10:37, three shocking events occurred in the city! Air crash, guerillas launched a full-scale attack to the military base in the southwest, the Green Church in the east side of the city responded to the attack of the Moro guerillas by launching a riot. In handling the event, Country F government demonstrated a lack of competency. Xiangjiang reporter, who ran the fastest, reporting for you."

But obviously, there were misinformation in the reporting.

Facing the angry crowd, the police force here shared a complex emotion. While they must face the curse and saliva, they could not fight back.

The government force already mobilized a brigade from the front line to establish the defensive nest to the east of the bridge. As long as they could control the situation on this side of the bridge, they could establish health inspection stations and transport verified "safe" civilian to the other side of the bridge.

The sheriff felt slightly relieved by the thought.

Although even till now, the Ministry of Health had yet to come up with a virus containment plan.

Suddenly, there were screams from the back of the crowd.

A few zombies ran, rolled, and tumbled across the fence of the bridge and leaped at the crowd without anywhere to ran.

The zombies already broke through the line of defense set by the army.

At the location where the commotion started, the sheriff saw a zombie in military uniform. One of his ears was bitten off, there was still a rifle across his shoulder, and that rifle was stained in blood...

The zombies that rushed into the crowd were like tigers leaping into a herd of sheep. People used their backpacks, umbrella, and even cameras to smashed the zombies frantically, but it was futile against the insane monsters.

People pleaded to the police with shields and begged them to make a way. The police all looked in their sheriff's direction while waiting for his order. The sheriff held the radio, but after anxiously speaking out the first sentence, he became silent.

Reality proved that even an insignificant individual standing at the right spot could influence the life of thousands.

The police saw the hand holding the radio slowly drop down and gradually began to lose grasp...

The radio slid out of his hand, he took out the revolver and aimed at the crowd.

Bang!

Instantly, everyone became silent.

The man fighting over the shield with the police widened his eyes slowly with disbelief, then collapsed onto the ground.

No one thought the police would fire first. And even the police didn't think their superior would be the first one to fire.

"What are you all waiting for! Fire! Think about your family behind you! They are the infected, not rioters! Can you not see! All the people being scratched or bitten will become their kind! I'll take all the responsibilities, I order you, fire! Fire! Fire—" The

sheriff used all the strength in his body and screamed at his subordinates.

The roar dispersed fear.

Guns were gradually beginning to be shot. After the initial hesitation, they became dense.

The people being abandoned watched the people that once protect them in despair, their eyes changed from agony to decisiveness to finally apathy.

The lives of the one hundred thousand in exchange for the sacrifice of the few thousand people.

The sheriff didn't execute his superior's ambiguous order and made the executive decision to fire. People who didn't want to die jumped off the bridge, the despaired opened their arms to welcome their fate, the people who could not accept being given up on used their last effort to throw rocks at the shields.

A rock hit the sheriff in the face, cracked his forehead. Blood dripped down from his face and clouded his left eye.

But he was laughing.

"The right order" was already executed, but what would happen in the end was out of his control.

He raised his revolver again and closed his eyes.

But this time, he was pointing at his own temple.

Bang!

Chapter 572: Airstrike

In the mountain range south of City K. One helicopter and two figures appeared.

One was kneeling down while one was standing.

Tanaka seemed to be tired from kneeling down. He stood up, opened his arms toward Kejia in the darkness, and smiled.

"Do you see it? My masterpiece."

A man in a suit stood beside him. He was holding onto the binocular while watching the chaos in the city.

"Just from a weapon point of view, it's not bad."

As a businessman, that was his impression.

"No wonder it is President Tanimura. Whether it is the attitude or diction is all similar to the bad guys," Tanaka said.

Without funding and connections, any conspiracy wouldn't have a starting point. The reason "Kurofune's" plan could succeed must be attributed to the soil and nutrient provided by Nippon government and corporations. This type of impeccable "weapon" with military and economic value was perfect for Takeda Pharmaceutical who could make a handsome amount through the vaccine business or to the Nippon government eager to expand its military influence.

For example, if the virus were to break out in their annoying country, what would happen? The only company, Takeda Pharmaceutical, with the anti-virus vaccine would instantly become the wealthiest company in the world overnight, and Nippon who owned Takeda Pharmaceutical would complete the feat they failed to achieve in the last century.

But if the Nippon government and Takeda Pharmaceutical really knew Tanaka's actual plan, would they still think this way?

But they would never know, just like no one will really believe Jiang Chen could travel back and forth to the future, no one would believe Tanaka was setting up for "aliens" to land on a defenseless planet. Even if one of them named their company as "Future" while the other named the organization as "Kurofune".

Tanimura put down the binocular, glanced at Tanaka without saying any words, and then headed to the helicopter.

"Are you not going to look a bit longer?" Tanaka turned around and laughed.

"No need, the board only needs to confirm the practical value of the virus," Tanimura's back was turned against Tanaka, and he said without emotion.

"Judging a samurai sword by its 'practical value' would only make the sword lose its shine."

"Oh?" Tanimura turned around and looked at Tanaka with questions in his eyes.

"You know what killed this city?" Tanaka asked with a smile.

Tanimura raised his eyebrows. "The virus?"

"Wrong," Tanaka shook his finger and smiled, "It is weakness; the weakness that belongs to a civilization..."

Ten kilometers out of City K, the entire west side of the city had fallen. Only one bridge managed to withhold till the end, but five bridges spanned across the river.

...

Weakness destroyed the civilization.

Compassion to the weak, awe to life, respect to law, admiration of rights...

All virtues of humans would eventually become the burden of survival in the face of an unconquerable obstacle.

The man that attempted to use his hug to change the wife that turned into a zombie, the people holding onto the dagger but unable to stab toward the neighbor, the people because of despair who jumped off the building not willing to become the same kind as the zombie...

Standing at the top of the building and looking down the street covered with blood, Jiang Chen came to a deep realization about this point. He disliked this country, but when he witnessed the atrocities that happened in front of his very eyes, he stomach instinctively felt agitated by the gruesome scene.

"These bastards..."

Jiang Chen took a deep breath, reloaded his rifle, took a few steps back before leaping toward the building across from him. He managed to jump over the ten meters of distance with the help of the kinetic skeleton. He leaped between buildings while running to the location of the crash.

The crossfire between the Country F government force and the unknown militants ended already. Out of the eight government soldiers, five were instantly killed while the remaining three only lasted for ten seconds under the fire of fifteen rifles. The helicopter was retreating, but it was taken down by an RPG.

The unknown militants quickly took control of the crash site. A soldier was planning to head into the wreckage to retreat the black box.

Boom!

A bullet penetrated the skull of that solider.

Giles grinning eyes immediately widened and locked onto the building one hundred meters out.

"He's here."

"Take cover!" Ladisiv signaled. Everyone immediately hid nearby and began firing back to the area.

Jiang Chen was shocked by how fast the militants reacted and continued to fire.

From their calmness against zombies and the lack of masks alone, this information was indicative that the virus must be connected to Tanaka.

The source of the virus or the reason behind his failed travel could all be answered by that person.

So, go die!

Jiang Chen dodged a few bullets flying at him and threw out ten Hummingbird drones.

His fingers tapped on the EP several times and then circled a few points.

When the circular discs with machine guns came flying toward them, Ladisiv immediately fired back.

The orange sparks circled the wreckage of the plane. Ladisiv was hit on his shoulder but took down two drones. In this group of people, he had the best shooting skill and the most battle experience.

But even then, it was his first time fighting with such terrifying objects.

"Dammit! Where did these things come from?" Ladisiv cursed while his reloaded under the cover fire of his squad.

"I told you, we are fighting against a God, so don't feel too surprised." Giles' forehead was bleeding while leaning against a wall almost completed destroyed as he continued to fire back.

After paying a price of five lives, the ten drones were finally taken down.

The powerful war machines made them feel a deep to the bone chillness.

Jiang Chen was also stunned.

Ten drones couldn't take care of them?

Although the EP's computation resource was limited, there is no way it can't take care of fifteen people.

The only explanation was that their shooting ability was incredible.

Because EP as a terminal could at most connect to ten Hummingbird drones at the same, Jiang Chen didn't store more in the storage dimension. He did possess the more powerful Python and Reptile, but he didn't want to expose them too early.

Especially since he still had other toys...

He took a deep breath as a menacing smile appeared on his face. Under the cover of the wall, he took out a thick and long heavy machine gun.

"Heavy machine gun! Retreat—"

Ladisiv's pupils immediately contracted, at the same time, he threw out a smoke grenade while running back to another wall.

"Too late!" Jiang Chen hoisted the heavy machine gun and smashed the stand onto the ground.

The hexagon shaped transparent bulletproof board expanded and reflected a colorful haze of the fires near the wreckage site, through the haziness was a sneering face.

A series of red dots surfaced on his retina, Jiang Chen aimed at the closest one and pressed the trigger.

"Go die!"

The violent bullets took a gust of wind along with it and shredded the dense, thick smoke. A direct hit by the massive bullet meant that whether it was the wall or flesh, it was shredded to pieces.

The undisguised firing attracted more zombies, but the annoying hearts were all included in Jiang Chen's kill zone.

Kill! Kill! Kill!

...

Ladisiv hidden behind a building was still panting in fear. Just that instant, only six out of the ten team members were left. He still didn't understand where the heavy machine gun came from.

"Is that really Jiang Chen? It is not the special forces from Country F or Xin?"

"Do you still not believe me now? My dear Mr. Ladisiv. I said we are murdering a God... to welcome a new God." He added the last sentence silently. Giles glanced at the number on his watch with a grin; he took out a flare from his waist.

"You're not going to use power armor? That's unfortunate, then try this!"

He ducked out of the cover and threw the flare toward Jiang Chen.

The flare flipped in the air and bloomed into a bright red flame.

At the scene, Jiang Chen's pupils immediately contracted. While he ended his fury, he immediately jumped to the side.

Almost instantaneously, a gust of winds blew by, carrying a storm of bullets that destroyed the entire building.

25mm machine gun shredded the heavy machine gun along with the building into concrete debris and exposed the reinforced steel.

With one hand holding onto the reinforced steel, Jiang Chen turned around to look at the building he was just standing on, and a drop of cold sweat rolled down his forehead.

[Good thing I didn't wear the power armor...]

The deep homing noise instantly faded, through the pitch black night, he saw a glimpse of a fighter jet soaring by.

Chapter 573: Aurora-20, Strike!

At 10:15 am, an F35 took off from a carrier and headed to MLL Island for a routine bombing mission.

"This is Vulture-1. Vulture-1 has entered the theater, over."

"This is the command center, Vulture-1, the target's position is (131, 374), approved to fire, over."

"Vulture-1 received, opening safety, over."

The pilot ended the communication, turned off the communication channel, reset the route on the radar, and suddenly diverted its route to City K. Until the F35 escaped the tracking of the friendly radar, the aircraft carrier finally realized something was off.

The station tried to contact the F35 several times that deviated from its route, but it did not receive a response.

After losing contact for three minutes.

Guided by a signal flare, the F35 launched an air raid on a ground target in the eastern part of City K.

...

Upon receiving a call from Xin Embassy, Ayesha's dropped her phone.

"What's wrong?" Xia Shiyu, who was watching TV, looked at the girl.

Originally, Xia Shiyu thought that it was difficult for her to get along with Ayesha. She was hesitant about Jiang Chen's decision. However, after a few days of spending time together, Xia Shiyu realized surprisingly that even after she stated her own attitude, their relationship did not become strained.

Perhaps because the two people were more similar, when they didn't need to talk, they seldom spoke.

Picking up the phone from the ground, Ayesha hesitated but did not tell the truth to Xia Shiyu.

"It's nothing."

Desperately telling herself not to be impulsive, Ayesha took a deep breath, suppressed the worry in her mind, and called a set of numbers that belonged to Jiang Chen.

It was busy...

The little hand holding the phone trembled. Although she believed that Jiang Chen would be okay. She still couldn't contain her fear and worry.

She was always brave, always had been like that.

Because there was always a person that treated her with gentleness.

At the same time, it was her only weakness.

At this moment, a hand came out from behind and gently held her hand.

Ayesha felt the warmth, blanked out.

"What happened, can you tell me?"

"But..."

"It's about Jiang Chen right?"

Biting her lower lip, Ayesha nodded.

"Tell me."

"But... you can't help."

"Your statement is infuriating."

"Ehh?" Ayesha looked at Xia Shiyu and then explained in a panic.
"No, it's not what you think, I mean..."

"If you don't say anything, how do you know that I can't help?
Don't forget, I am the CEO of Future Group. If you can help him, I

can also do the same!"

With Xia Shiyu's strong stance, Ayesha stared at her.

She lowered her head, her fingers no longer trembled, and a hint of relief and peace of mind resurfaced.

"Mhmm."

...

When the news of the plane Jiang Chen boarded had crashed reached Liu Haotiao through Wanghai Airport, the news then spread to Xin, it caused an earthquake among the senior officials of the country.

Zhang Yaping, who was visiting the Capital, used diplomatic authority to dial the phone number of the Country F presidential palace. At the same time, Ivan urgently mobilized all the soldiers on New Moon Island and ordered the Guardian-class frigates stationed at Coconut Island to the border of Country F.

"Why is MU771 shot down by missiles near the airspace of Country F? Mr. Aquino, I need your explanation."

"Please pay attention to your rhetoric, Mr. Zhang Yaping, I am not your subordinate, I do not need to explain anything to you," Although at a disadvantageous situation, Aquino was still displeased with the demanding tone used by the president of a small country. He put out a tough stance. "Our people have already started the rescue according to the procedure. But you know that the plane crashed in City K, and it is very difficult to conduct the rescue mission in the war zone! Our people are already working diligently. Also, I don't know where you heard the rumors, what evidence do you have to prove that the plane was shot down by a missile!"

"When the plane was struck, the captain of MU771 reported the situation to the Wanghai Airport. The Wanghai Airport has already handed over the recording to our embassy."

"Oh, God, it's just a recording! Let's not argue about whether Wanghai Airport's action follows the appropriate procedure, you can identify the aircraft is hit by a missile with a single recording? Who can guarantee that it was not a seagull? We also have evidence here! At the time of the incident, no warship equipped with air defense equipment was near the water of the incident! Before the black box is found, any of your rhetoric will be regarded as a provocation against Country F!"

Zhang Yaping gritted his teeth and tried to remain calm.

"I don't want to discuss with you who is responsible now. Half an hour has passed, where is your rescue team? This accident happened in your city! At least there should be some firefighters! If you really don't want to do anything, then let our people go!"

"No way!" Aquino rejected the offer without hesitation.

Let the troops of the neighboring country enter their own country? The relationship between Country F and Xin was not that close! What's more, the virus crisis in City K made Aquino feel an instinctive panic. Tourism was the economic pillar of Country F. If the epidemic and panic spread, it would undoubtedly make the already deteriorating economy suffer a severe downturn.

Not only must they prevent foreign rescue teams from entering, but the army must put the entire city under quarantine! No one would be allowed to enter or leave at will. Before the development of a vaccine, the roads and ports leading to City K must be completely shut down!

"What are you hiding?" Zhang Yaping said with a hazy expression.

"We aren't hiding anything! I have disclosed all the information that can be disclosed. What do you want?! Oh, I have to remind you that you should have seen from the photos taken by the satellite. The plane already turned into pieces, you think there are people still alive?"

"We have confirmed through the Sky Eye X1 Observation Satellite that Jiang Chen is still alive."

"Yes? Then you must be wrong. After all, you said that the satellite is a meteorological observation satellite." Aquino tried to deflect the blame.

"You are playing with fire." Zhang Yaping warned.

"Oh!" Aquino sneered at the threat.

The phone was hung up rudely.

Zhang Yaping took a deep breath and then called Ivan.

"Negotiation failed."

As if there was no such surprise, Ivan said, "No problem, we are ready now."

"You have to move fast." Zhang Yaping knew that it is useless to persuade him to keep calm, so he said with a bitter smile.

"We have always been fast, and we will never return empty-handed," Ivan said.

"Don't fight, if possible." Zhang Yaping made his final request.

"I'll try my best."

Soldiers wearing kinetic skeletons boarded four Black Hawk helicopters, flew to the apron on the frigate, and crossed the Country F border with the destination of MLL Island.

Although there was no declaration of war and the mission briefing only stated rescue, everyone was prepared for war. Especially the boys who hopped on the helicopter, eager to use the rifle in their hands.

At the same time, New Moon Island's airport was illuminated, bright as day.

Pilot: "Weapon system, normal. Hydraulic balance system, normal. Fuel tank, normal. Tail, normal..."

"Inspection complete. Shooter-1 requests to enter the runway."

Command Tower: "Approved."

Pilot: "Shooter-1 has entered the runway."

The ground crew raised the flag: "The runway inspection is complete!"

Command Tower: "Approved for takeoff. Good luck, Shooter-1. For our next month's salary, bring our boss home."

Pilot: "Roger... By the way, this is easy."

At the end of the communication, the pilot reached out and opened the throttle switch, and activated the artificial intelligence navigation system.

The vortex engine burst out a blue arc, and the fighter already soared through the runway and brought the palm leaves with it from dozens of meters away.

Aurora-20, strike!

Chapter 574: This night was bound to be unrestful

Kurofune.

Its nature was an underground organization, and its members were from all over the world. Although it was funded by the Nippon government and Nippon companies, they never fully understood the organization. The cooperation between the two sides was more of a "paid research" relationship, rather than a dependent relationship.

Kurofune's philosophy was not based on any superficial folklore or personal values, but on a near-crazy belief, or a stubborn ideology.

They believe that Natural Selection with the same origin as humans would bring eternal harmony to the human civilization, save humanity from its own suffering, and bring human civilization to the unreachable starry night no longer chained by gravity.

This kind of neo-religious group without any affliction to any organization and any secular interest was almost impossible to be discovered by intelligence organizations around the world.

The F35 pilot of Vulture-1 was one of the members of Kurofune. The original plan was to find a way to attack Jiang Chen's power armor, but there was a small change in the plan. Jiang Chen did not use the Power Armor but used the more flexible kinetic skeleton.

It was precisely because of this that the F35 changed the strategy of bombing and used the 25mm machine guns to shoot. But what Gordon did not expect was that the bullets that could blow tanks into pieces were dodged by Jiang Chen by instinct.

"The target is not hit." A report from the ground unit transmitted

into his ear.

"Roger. I will fire again."

Gordon glanced at the thermal imaging display and found the heat source hanging from the side of the building. He sneers and raises the height to prepare for another dive.

However, at this moment, the infrared lock alarm began to beep.

Gordon cursed under his breath and immediately released a flare, then began to maneuver.

A close-range air-to-air missile flew right past the fuselage and made all of his hairs jump up.

Gordon, who dodged a blow, immediately boosted the engine power to the max, trying to get rid of the lock by the other fighter.

Among all the fourth-generation fighters, the F35 was arguably one of the most expensive fighters in the world. Because of the improvement in ground attack, it gave up some air superiority. So while it possessed a strong combat power, its mobility was not the most outstanding among fighters.

But despite this shortcoming, the fourth-generation fighters still displayed its prowess that no third-generation fighters could compare.

Gordon didn't think that the sneak attack was from a fourth-generation fighter. He escaped the friendly radar, and before the UA military could respond, he would have already completed the ground attack mission before landing in a secret military base. Only a few countries possessed fourth-generation fighters, and he didn't think Xin was one of them.

Even Russia with a good relationship with Xin, wouldn't sell its fourth-generation plane to them.

With a sneer, Gordon, while resisting the blood boiling up in his body, was about to send an AIM-120 at the target chasing him.

But when he raised his speed to the maximum and looked behind him, his sneer froze.

The plane that he couldn't distinguish did not show any signs of being left behind.

"How is this possible!" Gordon gritted his teeth and glanced at the speed dial, which was already approaching the red zone, then he pulled up instantly.

The nose of the F35 raised up, causing an emergency stop in the air that significantly decreased its speed. The blood flowing up almost made him faint, but Gordon had a smug look on his face.

Human's response time would be unable to respond in such a high-speed close air to air combat.

As long as the enemy plane flew in the front, the identity of the prey and the hunter would be reversed!

But at this instant, Gordon saw an incredulous scene through his bloodshot eyes.

Just as he pulled up, the Aurora-20 chasing in the rear unleashed its 27mm machine guns and shredded his fuselage and wings.

Just like he expected, the Aurora-20 soared underneath him.

However, what he did not expect was that the other pilot could fire in an instant.

With his hands off the control, Gordon desperately reached out and opened the ejection seat. He floated in the cold night sky while watching his plane disintegrate in the air...

At the same time, the Aurora-20 pilot ended the bullet time state and skillfully turned on thermal imaging to enter ground attack mode.

"The air target has been cleared, Shooter-1 is waiting for attack commands."

...

Looking at the sparks in the air, and the silhouette that whizzed past, Jiang Chen was ecstatic.

It was Aurora-20!

He was worried about how to get rid of that fighter, but Ivan helped him solve this urgent issue.

Of course, he won't know that at this critical moment, it was Xia Shiyu that issued the attack command to Ivan as the CEO of the Future Group. In a strict sense, it was a decision out of her power because Future Group and Celestial Trade operated as separate entities. But in this critical period, it was no longer a consideration.

Xia Shiyu was the most suitable person to make this decision.

Taking a deep breath, Jiang Chen left the cover with a rifle and opened the radio life signal detection device mounted on the EP. Six red dots were marked on his EP, and they were accelerating toward him.

Jiang Chen sneered and loaded the rifle.

[I am so tired of all of you!]

However, the Aurora-20 apparently did not give him the opportunity to fight. A low-altitude dive sounded combined with dense bullets instantly obliterated three red dots along with the zombies on that street. The dust even drifted two blocks away and landed on Jiang Chen's nose.

Three people died instantly. They realized the mission has failed and began to disperse.

But would Celestial Trade let them escape?

Don't forget who trained Moro!

The roar of the engine came from the distance and smashed through the zombies that began to gather. The guerrillas wearing gas masks jumped down from the military trucks and began to

track the three unidentified soldiers who fled. The intensive gunshots echoed in the street. Guerrillas, zombies, and unidentified soldiers began a chaotic battle.

At the same time, a military Hummer stopped in front of Jiang Chen, and the general with a slanted military cap stepped out and saluted to Jiang Chen. He then spoke in English, though full of local characteristics.

"Mr. Jiang Chen, we have received a request from your country to come and pick you up. Please come with us, and we will take you to the safe area."

Turning off the EP, Jiang Chen looked at the direction of the wreckage of the plane and put the rifle behind his back.

"What about those three people?"

"Our people are tracking them and will definitely bring their heads!" the general said immediately.

With the escalation of the civil war, Moro was now relying more and more heavily on Celestial Trade's supply. Their previous cautious attitude turned into respect today. While it was not certain if they would remain respectful after independence, at least for now, the guerrillas without a military factory must depend on Jiang Chen to survive.

It was precisely because of this that the general's attitude towards Jiang Chen is exactly as modest as how a subordinate treats a superior.

"I don't want their heads, I want at least one to be alive." Suddenly, Jiang Chen pointed to the crashed passenger plane and went on, "Also, I need the black box."

"Leave it to us!"

After saying this, the general ordered the soldier next to him.

Then, Jiang Chen sat onto the Hummer and evacuated to the

camp on the outskirts of City k.

Ladisov and Gilles fought as they retreated but couldn't escape because of the sheer number advantage of the guerrillas. Gilles and another team member died in recalcitrance, and Ladisov chose to surrender and was taken to outside the city.

Country F mobilized two more divisions and repelled the Moro guerrillas. At the same time, the three divisions controlling City K deployed checkpoints at all entrances to the city while declaring a state of quarantine.

A crash; two planes.

Even for the world, this night was bound to be unrestful.

Chapter 575: You will definitely be the scapegoat for this!

Although Country F blocked the news for the first time, it was obviously impossible to suppress such a big thing in the information age.

First of all, it was a "Resident Evil" incident.

The cruel virus turned the city into hell. People were killing each other, suspecting each other and being isolated in the desperation of water and electricity. According to Country F's Ministry of Health, a total of 111,000 people died in the riot caused by the virus and the remaining population was less than 70,000, isolated by three infantry divisions stationed in City K.

Although the virus only broke out in this modest city, the aftermath was the impact on the world.

The stock market will always be the market benchmark. The global stock market opened, all medicine-related stocks rose sharply. Some military-related stocks also appeared to skyrocket because there were rumors related to virus and terror attacks. Given the dangers of this virus, countries increased the terror crackdown efforts and added a budget on it.

On the other hand, antibiotics and other drugs in many countries and regions and convenience food had become out of stock.

Facing the emptiness of the shelves, Wal-Mart and other major supermarkets were really happy and sad. The joy was that the goods that were just put on shelves were stuffed into the shopping cart by the shoppers immediately. The worry was that salespeople had to face those who were angry as they couldn't buy the necessities. They had to call the suppliers to get shipments urgently.

Because of this incident, the Future Biological Group made a

fortune unexpectedly. When people chose to buy food for storage, it seemed that they had a special taste of nutrition, especially the relatively inexpensive high-calorie nutrient supply, which was almost extinct from the shelves.

Promoting the major cooperative supermarket orders looked like floating snowflakes. Amazon, Taobao and other virtual stores were also out of stock. The Future Man Biological earned a lot in the pain and joy of promoting orders.

Under the help of people with a conscience, this incident of "Resident Evil" was obviously over-hyped. Despite the Country F Health Department making several clarifications that the virus barely survived in ultraviolet light and showed strong activity only at night. This rational voice from officials was soon subsided in the report which the media made regarding its destructive power.

Just looking at its destructive power and not looking at the pathogenesis and survival conditions, this virus was really frightening.

Because the term "zombie" was so popular that people had almost used it as synonymous for eschatology. Who was responsible for the panic buying? Perhaps Hollywood directors and those who wrote doomsday novels should take the blame....

While this "riot" was spreading to the rest of the world, the Hua government had performed very well. They arrested the posters on forums that spread false information and made a statement on all television stations and online channels to control the situation with high efficiency. Meanwhile, Ministry of Media and Publication investigated and dealt with a number of non-realistic novels, and arrested those who wrote doomsday novels just for proselytizing the public.

And then there was the F35 crash.

Yesterday evening, an F35 fighter named "Vulture-1" took off from an aircraft carrier and conducted an air strike mission on

MLL Island, however, after arriving in the theater, the fighter plane cut off communication with the aircraft carrier and disappeared from the radar.

Subsequently, the aircraft launched an air strike on City K, killing at least 24 civilians.

After the attack, the F35 fighter disintegrated at high altitude over City K. The wreckage was already controlled by the government forces and has been handed over to the UA military on the aircraft carrier. At present, the UA military did not make further disclosures. A spokesman said the CIB has intervened to investigate the incident.

It was reported that the pilot flying the fighter was Carol Gordon. His comrades commented he was a great person. Before carrying out the mission, he didn't show any abnormalities. According to the testimony of the doctor in charge of his medical examination, Gordon was a person with good conduct and without a history of addictive drugs.

At present, the body of the pilot was found. Based on the wreckage of the aircraft, the pilot parachuted out before the plane crashed. Both Country F's government forces and the Moro guerrillas denied knowing the pilot's presence. The Moro guerrillas said they would agree if the UA force send limited personnel into Moro to search for the pilot if the UA agreed to stop the air strikes on MLL Island.

The UA spokesperson did not respond to the Moro proposal, but the aircraft carrier had stopped its routine strikes.

The last information was about the MU771 flight incident.

As the MU771 flight was considered the cause of the virus, Wanghai International Airport temporary closed for a day. After obtaining the virus samples from Country F, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Public Security conducted a comprehensive joint inspection of Wanghai Airport. Nothing was

found regarding any suspect carrying the virus at the airport, and eventually proved to be a false alarm.

Country F said that the crash was a complete accident. Any rumor that the airliner was shot down by missiles was irresponsible and stupid. In the targeted sea of the accident, Country F did not conduct any military activity. All the speculations were meaningless until the black box was found!

Aquino was full of confidence to get rid of this blame that he did not involve in. Before holding a press conference, he repeatedly talked to his Marshal General and generals so that he could confirm he had sufficient evidences at hand to prove that the plane's crash was absolutely unrelated to Country F's troops. As for why the black box was not available, it was not because Country F's government wanted to conceal something, but because the black box was taken away by the guerrillas who rushed to the crash site.

What they said was correct!

But some people wanted to let them take responsibility anyway.

Faced with questions from the international community, Santos did not conceal anything and placed the black box in front of the camera. He said the guerrillas immediately carried out research and rescued Jiang Chen, the only survivor. The black box was handed over to the United Nations' observers, and data was examined under the supervision of the international community.

The media also devoted a great deal of enthusiasm about this lucky survivor. However, Xia Shiyu stood out for Jiang Chen and stopped all the media interviews. She only gave a general statement explaining that Jiang Chen had a serious injury but it was not life-threatening, and he did not get infected with the virus.

The entrance of the hospital filled with flowers people offered spontaneously. The flowers were the national flower of Coro, a specialty in Coro Island. People sent their prayers and respect for him by using the purest way. That the thriving Coro Island was

because of Jiang Chen, supported by all by all of the islanders.

The investigation of the black box progressed swiftly. After the experts retrieved the data, they immediately released the findings to the international community... The reason for the plane crash was a missile struck the left wing engine, which was consistent with the message revealed by the plane's last communication with the ground.

The international community was in an uproar.

Aquino immediately jumped out and denied the authenticity of the black box data.

Yet no one believed his argument.

If a hacker wanted to replace the real recorded data with fake data, one change would need a series of data to be replaced.

In addition, some of the aircraft's basic data were transmitted to the ground in real time through ACARS (Aircraft Communication Addressing and Reporting System), and the United Nations had confirmed that ACARS transmission was normal. This means any difference in data would be quite obvious.

It is not difficult to tamper with the black box data; however, it is almost impossible to leave no trace behind. And those international experts repeatedly checked the black box and even checked to see if anyone tried to open the box by force.

This time Aquino had nothing to say at all.

Various kinds of evidence were laid before him, and he just could not find strong evidence to refute. The black box data have proven the MU771 was not only shot down by missiles but also shot down by missiles launched from Country F.

Just as the Aquino administration was struggling to be accountable to the media and the families of the victims, spokesperson for Celestial Trade issued a statement.

"It is a pity that it is me who stands here reading the resolution of the company, not our beloved chairman. We cannot disclose more about his injuries, and I can only reveal that he had woken up only once in three days. Today I stand here just to read his directions on the company's future."

He took a deep breath and clenched his fist and then rested it on the desk gently.

"I think you should all know what it means to assassinate a key member of a state."

"A shameless conspiracy."

"No!"

"This means war!"

Chapter 576: The Reason for Justice

War?

War!

The sentence was loud and clear.

Almost all the reporters at the scene were wondering if they heard wrong. When they confirmed that they weren't being delusional, the crowd erupted.

Xin... No, Celestial Trade just declared war against Country F?

The spokesperson in front of the podium appeared extremely calm while facing the audience in disbelief. When he received the script, he was also shocked and in disbelief. But after he read through the entire script, there was only calmness left.

War will always only be responded by war!

As the headquarters of Celestial Trade was blocked by reporters, where did our "injured" protagonist go?

Currently, in an ocean-side mansion ten kilometers away from the hospital, Jiang Chen lowered his head, relaxing on top of Ayesha's cool thighs. He was relishing in the sea wind while enjoying his ears being cleaned.

The strands of hair that occasionally swept by his face and the person gazing at his face made him feel fuzzy both psychologically and physiologically.

Jiang Chen was so relaxed due to one reason. Since he supposedly was in "critical condition" and receiving treatment, he couldn't directly appear in front of the media at least for a short period of time.

When Jiang Chen was taken to Port D by Moro guerillas, he met with Ivan who personally came to pick him up. Judging by the fully equipped soldiers on the helicopter, they were clearly ready

to fight in battle. If the Country F government dared to intercept, they would forcefully land with the support of cannons and fighters!

From the perspective of Santos and other guerillas, Jiang Chen noticed some envy of Celestial Trade's advanced equipment.

Jiang Chen suddenly had an idea and a plan began to form in his mind.

An extremely dangerous plan.

He walked beside Santos and put his arm around his shoulder.

"Do you want to end this civil war earlier?"

Santos was filled with excitement that was indescribable by words. Although the guerrillas were growing stronger by the day, in the face of the F army with advantages in both firepower and numbers, the outcome of the war was still unclear.

Seeing that Celestial Trade was willing to assist him further, there was no reason for Santos to reject Jiang Chen. Although he didn't show any expression, the muscular man with bullets wrapped around his body immediately held onto Jiang Chen's hand. He expressed that the people of MLL Islands would forever remember his generosity and friendship...

Of course, Jiang Chen didn't want a declaration of friendship.

Celestial Trade would send navy, air, and even land forces under the guise of mercenaries to participate in the civil war. The fees would still be limited time rights to mines and ores, but Jiang Chen generously offered to only charge at "cost."

The only requirement for Moro was to take control of City K.

Even if Jiang Chen hadn't demanded this, they still would've done it. The City K was K River's outlet into the sea - a strategic location for K Island.

The only disagreement came from the timing of taking over the

city.

Since the city was in the midst of a terrifying infection, the guerrillas all resisted the idea of entering the city now.

On the other hand, in order to quarantine the city, three Country F divisions were sent there. From a strategic point of view, the best course of action wasn't to attack the heavily defended Kejia but rather to shift focus east and recover the northeast part of MLL Islands.

But Jiang Chen didn't care too much - he merely suggested a contrary opinion.

"Mr. Santos, we're here to help you end the civil war. We're not here to drag the war on. How do we quickly end this civil war? It's by focusing our fire and beating the opponent down with one punch, and then dragging their necks to the negotiation table."

"But we don't have enough force to go against three divisions," Santos said, troubled.

"We do." Jiang Chen paused. "We have enough firepower."

Modern warfare was never won by sheer manpower. While the number of Celestial Trade soldiers was around two thousand, their impact on the war was unquestionable.

Finally, Santos acquiesced to Jiang Chen's proposal. He agreed to send a division of forces to assist Celestial Trade's forces in taking control of Kejia. But if the casualties were above 40%, they would retreat.

Jiang Chen confidently expressed there was no way that would ever happen.

As for the excuse of starting a war, he already thought of one.

The public already believed that Country F mistakenly thought the commercial flight was Hua's reconnaissance plane and therefore launched a land-to-air missile to take it down. Then

Jiang Chen didn't mind adding oil to the fire and directing public opinion to even more dangerous territory - when Country F received information that Celestial Trade's president, Jiang Chen, was on the flight, they launched the missile as an act of revenge.

With Country F's apathy toward the lives of the innocent and their attempt to make excuses for their criminal actions, Celestial Trade would respond with war!

In order to discover the truth behind the spreading virus and to find the vaccine as early as possible, Jiang Chen was determined to take control of virus-infected City K.

He wouldn't permit anyone from making this place into a second apocalypse, whether it was because he wanted to maintain the value of his wealth or fight against the colonization ship en route. Although he felt apologetic, he needed Country F to be the scapegoat for the plane crash.

Therefore, Jiang Chen, who agreed with Santos and Ivan, acted out everything in front of the media.

Three days had passed since the crash.

"Don't move. I'm almost done."

Ayesha took a Q-tip and attentively cleaned out Jiang Chen's remaining wax. He was about to fall asleep.

"Ten minutes ago, the Country F Foreign Ministry warned that Celestial Trade's dangerous words would be viewed as an act of aggression. They already sent their navy forces to the border... is that really okay?"

Xia Shiyu was sitting on the chaise longue. She pushed up her black-rimmed glasses and made her report while pretending not to see Ayesha.

"Not a problem. Country F's navy is a joke."

"What about UA?" Xia Shiyu was a beginner in international

relations, so when she told Jiang Chen, she had doubt in her voice.

"UA won't do anything," Jiang Chen said affirmatively.

Perhaps they wanted to, but an hour later, they would change their opinion.

Just as she wanted to ask where his confidence came from, the glass door to the balcony of the mansion was opened.

"Mr. Patient, do you need any refreshments?" Liu Yao, in a nurse uniform, walked in and asked mockingly.

The gazes of three people landed on her.

Coldness from Xia Shiyu, praise from Ayesha, and shock from Jiang Chen.

The nurse uniform was part of Ayesha's collection and the size was based on Ayesha's petite body shape. Since the uniform was worn by the busty Liu Yao, it clearly looked "restrained."

Her firm curves were tightly outlined by the dress and the bustiness of her chest was about to jump out from the thin layer of fabric.

Jiang Chen discovered that the clearly-too-small uniform looked surprisingly nice on Liu Yao.

Perhaps Liu Yao noticed Xia Shiyu's stare but she pretended not to notice, laughed, and pointed at her chest.

"Seems to be a bit small."

"OHH—"

Xia Shiyu glanced at Liu Yao's chest and her lips turned into a firm line in frustration.

Not only Xia Shiyu was affected, but the innocent Ayesha also looked sad.

As to why Liu Yao was there, it was because of yesterday.

When the girl saw Jiang Chen in critical condition after the plane

crash, she immediately flew to Xin in distraught. Since she looked too wretched crying in front of the hospital, Ayesha brought her to the mansion.

Seeing as Jiang Chen was perfectly fine, although Liu Yao was frustrated by the fact that she worried about him for nothing, the cunningness in her immediately realized the reasoning. She then suggested that she stay there and take care of the "patient" unable to appear in front of the media.

At the same time, they kept this a secret from the media.

While Jiang Chen didn't say anything, he was touched by how worried Liu Yao was.

But Xia Shiyu felt extremely displeased by the appearance of another "competitor." Liu Yao, on the other hand, didn't seem to mind the faint "jealousy" from the strong, independent and unexpressive woman, but it made teasing her more fun.

With the soft wind blowing on Jiang Chen's face, he watched the quiet ocean and picked up his tablet.

"The weather is quite nice today."

Ayesha threw out the Q-tip and combed back a strand of hair.

"Is it...? But it looks like the weather is going to turn much worse."

Jiang Chen nonchalantly said as he turned on the tablet.

The Sky Eye X1 36, thousand kilometers out, directed its lens to the surface of the Pacific Ocean.

On the vast blue ocean, there was a showdown between four and 101.

Chapter 577: The Power of the Electromagnetic Pulse Cannon

On the vast blue ocean, 101 ships slowly anchored at the Xin-F border. Under the command of the flagship, they arranged themselves in formation.

The main naval forces in Country F were mostly decommissioned Western ships such as the UA minesweeper, the British patrol boats, and some of the France and UA tank-landing ships from World War II.

Take the largest and most powerful "Rajah" destroyer of the Country F Navy as an example. The predecessor of this "legendary" destroyer was the Cannon-class destroyer built by UA during World War II. In 1955, UA handed it over to Nippon's navy. Nippon renamed the ship to "Sunrise" and it was used until 1975. The ship was handed over to Country F by Nippon in 1978 and first served in Country F in 1980 after being towed to South Korea for overhaul and modernization.

It was a third-hand good; a bone that fed two dogs.

The ship was equipped with three MK22 76 mm open-naval guns which exposed the gunner without any basic armor protection, three 40 mm double-gauge guns, six 20 mm cannons, and four 12.7 mm machine guns. This set up was typical for the UA Navy during World War II.

However, as the main force of the Country F Navy, there were also "Hamilton" class cruisers that were eliminated by two UA coast guards. In August 2011, the UA handed a retired "Hamilton" class patrol ship to Country F that was renamed "Gregory" by Country F and considered the most advanced among the F Navy warships.

However, the backwardness of the equipment didn't prevent

them from despising Xin in their hearts.

They feared a confrontation against Hua, but beating a small country like Xin was no problem at all!

51 major combat ships, and more than 50 auxiliary ships for a total of more than one hundred warships lined up near the border in the western Pacific. Naval soldiers raised their heads high, fully armed. They looked quite like "the King of the military"!

Lieutenant Colonel Millennion, who served as the commander-in-chief of operations, was also considered "young and promising" in Country F politics. During his tenure as commander of the Country F Navy, he commanded a "landing attack" exercise jointly organized by the Marine Corps and the UA Army and proposed a strategy of "front-line first," participated in the 116th anniversary celebration of the founding army, and proposed the construction of a naval base...

Standing in the command tower of the flagship "Hamilton" class patrol ship, General Millennion adjusted his naval cap. His hands were behind his back while he gazed out at the peaceful ocean.

In this overwhelming war, he was thinking up ways to humiliate his opponent that dared to simultaneously challenge them.

Country F needed a real victory to demonstrate its naval strength to the world in order to deter the young from frequently harassing their borders.

Guardian-class frigate?

It was indeed very powerful; Russian weapons always dominated. But he heard that the idiot demolished the ship's 100-mm A-190 gun and replaced it with a cannon that couldn't be recognized at all. The wide, flat barrel was like a "tuning fork" lying down, and Millennion didn't consider it a threat to the "Hamilton" under his control. Without the most important main cannon, with just two 14.5 mm machine guns, what could the Guardian-class frigate even

do?

Millennion knew that while the Russians sold the ship to Jiang Chen, both its anti-aircraft missiles and anti-ship missiles were dismantled. After all, these equipment were considered military secrets; even as a business partner, Russia didn't have any reason to share all of its knowledge.

Adjutant went to his side and sharply saluted him.

"Five FA-50s have arrived and are currently in cruise mode. Harpoon-1 is requesting attack commands."

Millennion smiled and didn't answer. Instead, he asked an irrelevant question.

"Rolando, in your opinion, what suit color is the most appropriate for attending a celebration ceremony?"

Roland took a moment to process before smiling pleasantly

"I recommend the blue one."

"Just as I thought; that's my favorite suit," Millennions said before narrowing his eyes at the distant horizon and reciting in an ancient dialect poem. "Our warriors have been eager while the opponent is still on the road ..."

However, this general had no poetic abilities. Two sentences in and he was stuck. Next to the general, the first mates were watching, and Millennion's expression couldn't be more embarrassed.

Roland, watching the scene, immediately stepped in to divert people from the embarrassment. "They are so slow. It's as if they're heading to an execution."

"Yes! It's like heading to an execution!" Millennion laughed and patted Roland's shoulder. He was glad his subordinates were witty to save him from embarrassment. "No more waiting - pass on my orders! All ships push forward with speed six nautical miles. If they

don't come, we'll go conquer them! Also regarding our flight formation - they're approved for attack!"

"Roger!" Roland straightened his back with his face red in excitement. He roared into the radio: "This is the control tower. Harpoon-1, target the enemy ship, attack permission granted... Harpoon-1?"

There was no response from the radio.

Roland's expression began to change. He had a bad feeling.

Just then, on the deck outside the command tower, someone screamed and pointed at the clear sky.

"What's that?"

Among the clouds, a fighter jet soared by before two explosions bloosomed in the air.

The pieces falling had FA engraved on them before smashing into the ocean. Like a tiger in a herd of sheep, Aurora-20's machine guns shredded FA-50's fragile armor while repeating the cycle with its high mobility.

The second they engaged in battle, two FAs were taken down. The other three FA-50s, who realized something was wrong, attempted to escape the lock-on by guided missiles.

But the two Auroras didn't give them the opportunity to escape.

The trails of five ignitions interweaved in the sky. After a moment of battle, three more explosions rang out in the sky.

The F navy, which understood the situation immediately, started to fire into the air, but Aurora-20s dodged swiftly like seagulls.

They dropped two missiles before quickly ascending above the clouds. The heat-luring missiles danced in the air and disrupted the anti-air missiles originally intended for them.

"Rajah destroyer has been hit! The ammunition bunker is on fire! Ahhhhh!"

"... Kemira anti-submarine ship has been hit! The deck is collapsing!"

Millennion looked pale because too much information was being shouted at him. He couldn't handle it all at the same time. His previous ease had been brutally crushed. He raised his trembling fingers and adjusted his crooked navy cap, but it couldn't be fixed somehow.

"Sir ..." The captain looked equally as pale as Millennion. His ominous feeling grew stronger.

But he couldn't say the word "retreat."

Just then, an unexpected incident happened again!

An orange-red arc pierced through the still waves and broke through the side of the Hamilton-class cruiser leading the fleet without warning, leaving a staggering hole! The hull was exposed by the large kinetic force and pushed it down into the ocean. Water flooded in and instantly submerged the ship that was regarded as the pride of Country F.

Millennion looked pale white. The previous conceit on his face could no longer be seen.

His adjutant, Rolando, had forgotten his language abilities completely. His pupils blankly zoomed into the calm ocean.

They hadn't even seen the shadow of the enemy ship before they were pierced by shells.

Yes, this was an asymmetrical war.

...

But the asymmetrical advantage didn't belong to them - it belonged to the opposing side.

"Run!"

His fictitious arrogance was crushed. Millennion used his last bit of courage to yell the word into the radio.

The Country F Navy began to disperse, turn around, and flee.

But the two Guardian-class frigates that already arrived at the border wouldn't let them succeed. The raised electromagnetic pulse cannon repeatedly charged and fired. The orange tails under the influence of the earth's gravitational force drew out a large curvature in the sky. Under the observation of the Sky Eye X1, it constantly rained down on the fleeing Country F ships.

The two Kilo-class submarines shifted around the edge of the battlefield. They used torpedoes to sink any ships attempting to escape, like fishing boats that dispersed fish.

The Country F Navy's nightmare had just begun!

Pieces of steel appeared and vanished in the waves as did the cries and prayers hidden among the explosions.

Fires kindled on the surface of the ocean and matched the redness in the horizon.

In that instant, it was hard to distinguish where the actual sunset was.

Chapter 578: City K under Quarantine

The terror of a quarantined city spread like the plague in people's minds. Although Country F sent two divisions of forces to control the situation, the gloom of death still lingered in people's minds.

A city with more than a hundred thousand people only had seventy thousand left.

The entire east side lost control and the majority of the west side was lost as well. The government forces spent a night defeating the attacking guerillas then spent an entire day in the south area of the west side of the city to create a safe zone with barbed fences.

The second day after the plane crash, the government forces established a quarantine in the city and limited the zombies inside the City K. At the same time, helicopters hovered around the boundaries of the city while searching for any zombies that might have escaped.

At the same time, the Country F government sent out cargo planes and airdropped humanitarian aid to zombie-occupied areas. Along with the aid were small books on how to survive in zombie-occupied areas, reminding people to remain hopeful in the face of disaster.

Based on estimates, there were still ten thousand people struggling in "occupied areas." They could either be uninfected or the few lucky ones immune to the virus. Regardless, they were in an extremely dangerous situation, but the Country F government could no longer divert any more helicopters to rescue them. Even international aid groups weren't permitted to enter due to the danger of the virus and the influence of the civil zone.

People in the safe zone also suffered.

Seventy thousand people were stuffed in a separated zone only a few square kilometers large, unable to really live their lives. The

living spaces were crowded. The lack of necessities caused chaos for security. In despair, the ugly side of humans was fully exposed. People fought over boxes of antibiotics and sold their bodies for a piece of bread. The "cleaners" responsible for health inspection controlled everyone's lives. The soldiers responsible for distributing humanitarian aid could freely determine who would be fed. Aside from the soldiers who didn't approach the area, they were the emperors of the safe zone.

No media outlets were permitted to enter the area. No one knew what was happening there, no one knew how long the quarantine would last, and no one knew if they still had the zombie virus hidden in their bodies. To all of society, they were dangerous, and at least before a vaccine was found, they couldn't return to society.

It was a source of despair.

This place was no different than a concentration camp.

It only took two days for the situation to deteriorate to this point.

On the third day, the situation in City K was under control. The 21st Infantry Division pushed its defense line to the south. At the same time, the 14th Division sent out a mechanized brigade to push from the safe zone to the K River and repair the bridge. But the commander clearly underestimated the strength of the zombies. The mechanized brigade didn't even reach the bridge before they experienced heavy casualties.

In theory, the soldiers with hot weapons shouldn't be at a disadvantage against the zombies, but reality dictated otherwise.

While the equipment of Country F's land forces wasn't as terrible as the navy's, their training level was exceptionally low. This point wasn't demonstrated by their ability to shoot but their ability to adapt in battle.

Firing at unarmed civilians, even with orders from the commander, meant the soldiers executing the orders had to bear a

great amount of mental pressure. This pressure arose from the sense of morality built since they were born from the restriction of living in a society governed by laws. They knew it was wrong, but they had to do it...

A lot of people unable to withstand the pressure unleashed fire onto hoards of zombies while relinquishing their fear through bullets, but they forgot the importance of shooting their heads. Against zombies, this was a critical error.

What made the soldiers even more distraught was that they had to press the trigger against their comrades who had been bitten. No medicine could treat them now. The only way to end their misery was death, at least for now.

Why didn't they push forward with the help of the artillery?

Because of damned humanitarianism.

As long as there was a single civilian left in the city, as long as the outside world remained civilized, the Country F government forces wouldn't permit firing in its own city. Countless eyes were watching them, so politicians wouldn't allow them, and the media wouldn't allow them.

They faced a great deal of pressure already, firing bullets at the heads of "patients" instead of using tranquilizers.

The city was a mess, and it was a mess they had to take care of. Aquino thought of burning down the entire city more than once - he wanted to just burn the insane and the virus in a great fire... But it wasn't possible unless he wanted to face charges of crimes against humanity.

Just as the mechanized brigade returned to the safe area with low morale, Country F's Ministry of Foreign Affairs received the declaration of war from Celestial Trade.

Three hours ago, the Navy fleet at the border was completely wiped out.

Two and a half hours ago, Country F's Presidential Palace repeatedly confirmed the accuracy of the information with the Country F Navy's command center.

Two hours ago, the information was passed to the Second Army Commander stationed at City K. At the same time, Celestial Trade's Marines landed at the port of Dawo.

At the moment, Lieutenant-General Belli stood in the interim command headquarters and held a simple meeting.

Just then, an officer entered the barracks, interrupting the meeting in progress.

"What's the matter, Sergeant Cavell?"

Sergeant Cavell saluted, stood upright and made his report.

"According to the pictures taken by UA satellites, after the naval blockade was broken through, Celestial Trade Marines landed at Port D. It is suspected that heavy weapons have also landed."

"What about the UA military?" This was the most important issue to Belli.

"The aircraft carrier is quiet for the time being. The Capital said it would provide intelligence support for our operations via satellites and provide assistance in resolving the issue through diplomatic mediation..." Cavell replied.

"These treacherous cowards," Belli scoffed, slashing the map with his marker.

At present, Jiang Chen was unconscious. The reason why the UA offered such an appeasement strategy was in fear that the unscrupulous Celestial Trade would overreact; another reason was its uncertainty in its combat strength.

Guardian-class frigate electromagnetic pulse cannons and Aurora-20s combat performance shocked the Stan aircraft carrier monitoring the battle through the global hawk unmanned aerial

drone. Therefore, the Capital had to re-evaluate the strength of Xin while discussing the necessity of adjusting its diplomatic strategy toward the country.

Although the Hamilton-class cruiser was a decommissioned ship from the coastal guards, it was still too strong to be pierced by one shell. In particular, this semi-curved shell wasn't a missile, thus it couldn't be defended against by anti-missile defenses. They weren't going to take the risk until they were certain the Stan aircraft carrier could take the hit. After all, the real opponent in the region was Hua. Even if they finished off Xin's navy, it would be detrimental for them if the aircraft carrier battle group around the region was damaged.

Yes, they didn't think the two Guardian-class frigates would be worthy opponents for the aircraft carrier battle group. No matter how powerful they were, they were just two frigates. Compared to the battle group with comprehensive battle functions, their abilities couldn't compare.

No one suspected that it would hurt if these two "ants" bit them.

There were still a lot more things to discuss, but before they could reach a conclusion, the Celestial Trade soldiers would likely beat F down already.

That was the essence of a Blitz!

"In this region, the 21st Division has already established a line of defense deployed with anti-air cannons and machine guns. I need you to take the 15th Mountain Range Division to traverse through the mountains to the east of K River and deploy the new mid-range anti-air missiles UA provided us at these five points, as well as artillery support to provide coverage for the 21st Division to the west of the river."

"Also, mobilize the 101st Mechanized Brigade in the northeast to the rural area of the city. Once the enemy focus on the defensive line is established along the river, push the 101st Mechanized

Brigade forward while cooperating with the 19th Paratrooper Division to attack the Port D. We need to push the arrogant Xin soldiers into the sea! Make the foolish navy realize the abilities of our land forces!"

With this setup, the roads from the port to City K were completely blocked by the firepower of two divisions. Any forces attempting to break through the defense had to pay a heavy price!

"Defense... How long will this war last?" The supply officer turned his pen and looked at Belli.

"Perhaps half a year, perhaps only a month."

"If they're foolish enough to dive into our line of defense, maybe it'll only last ten days." Seeing that the conference was coming to an end, an officer joked around.

A proud curvature appeared on Belli's mouth.

He fully agreed with his subordinate's comment, although he didn't think the enemy would be foolish enough to seek their own death.

At the very least, Country F's military power was ranked 25th in the world - that is, after being dragged down by the useless bastards from the navy.

Although this ranking was nothing to be proud off, they didn't fear Xin as they hadn't even made it onto the rankings.

...

While Country F was busy establishing its defense line, the two Guardian-class frigates were already approaching Port D. The electromagnetic pulse cannon was set up while waiting for its firing orders.

A night of preparation and rest.

One thousand Celestial Trade soldiers in kinetic skeletons already boarded the landing ship to enter the port then took control of the

region Moro set out for them. Ten large cargo helicopters were waiting for orders on the empty ground, waiting for strike orders.

MLL Islands were mostly mountainous and covered in forests, which made it difficult for armed units to engage in combat. This was extremely beneficial for both Moro guerillas and Celestial Trade.

Ivan, with his general's cap and shades, took the helicopter and arrived at Port D again. This time, he arrived as the commander.

Moro's 5th Infantry Division arrived at the airport for their welcoming and the two powerful hands shook together.

"Prepared and ready to go?"

"Prepared and ready to go."

Ivan took off his shades and stuffed them into his chest pocket.

"Then let the battle begin!"

Chapter 579: The Rain of Destruction

In the bushes, two soldiers leaned against a tree while cautiously scanning their surroundings.

Behind them were anti-air machine guns. These weapons were usually powerless against fighters, but once they formed a numerical advantage, even fourth generation fighters would be afraid of diving through the dense waves of bullets.

Beside the anti-air machine guns was a box of Spike RPG rockets; it was provided by UA as an addition to Country F's close-range air defense.

The surroundings were quiet with only the sound of bugs heard, unique to subtropical rainforests.

The humid climate made it extremely easy to feel sleepy. In order to not fall asleep, the two soldiers began to chat.

"How long do you think the war will last?"

"I don't know, maybe two months? Or it could be three months."

"That's so problematic... Why can't I be a part of the 14th division?" The man with a mustache drove away the butterfly resting on top of his rifle as he muttered in annoyance.

"The 14th Division? Is it fun to be with the infected? I remember all the people who went had to sign a voluntary disclosure. Until a vaccine comes out, you can't come out after you go in." A young-looking man rested his rifle on his arm and laughed.

"You don't understand." The man with the mustache laughed, got closer and whispered, "The cleaners are the emperors on the inside, but being a cleaner is still a bit dangerous since you have to interact with the infected. The people in logistics have the best jobs - think about all the girls in the safe zone... Haha, you can play with them however you want."

"What if you can't come out?"

"Then I can't come out," the man said decisively.

"I have a girlfriend." A breeze of wind blew by and the young man scanned the still bushes with disinterest.

"If you go there, you'll have a lot of girlfriends," the man with a mustache joked.

While the two chattered, a transparent ghost sneaked by the two of them.

The infrared indicator the size of a button was placed not far behind them. The faint light under the disguise of the bushes was as unnoticeable as a ladybug among ferns.

When all the markers were placed, the Ghost Agent arrived at the edge of the battlefield and retreated through a small helicopter.

On the helicopter, she opened her communication device.

"All markers have been placed."

At the same time, ten thousand meters in the sky, an Aurora-20 pilot ended cruising mode and opened the infrared radar.

"Affirmative."

On the black and white screen, tons of red square boxes instantly locked onto the white signal source.

The pilot checked the radar, confirmed the attack radius and height, and opened the safety switch before pressing the red button.

"This is Shooter-2, MXJ-11 is starting to deploy..."

The button of the hull opened and a bomb painted with red paint separated from the rack.

Without a bright trail of flames, it was only an unnoticeable black dot that dropped from the sky.

When its elevation reached 2000 meters, the shell of the bomb

instantly separated, exposing the bullets inside.

Like seeds dropped from a seeding plane, they bloomed into flowers in the green forest.

Its name was death.

The explosion came out of nowhere in the targeted forest. Sparks and shrapnel flew in the forest and shredded everything in the vicinity.

It was the rain of death.

MXJ-11, nicknamed smallpox, weighed 1,200 pounds, was divided into high explosive and piercing types, and belonged to PAC end-guided cluster bombs - an imitation version. An MXJ-11 contained 88 sub-bombs with end guidance that, when thrown to a specified height, released all the sub-bombs and eliminated all locked targets in the target area under the screening of the intelligence program.

Seventy-four air defense targets were eliminated in a flash. The airstrike came from ten thousand meters above and the sentinels on guard didn't even have the time to take cover from the explosions...

Because the explosions were too dazzling, the pilot turned off the infrared instrument and pressed the radio on the helmet.

"This is Shooter-2. Air defense points have been cleared, over."

"Shooter-3 and 4, received. Short range attack initiated. Shooter-1 and 5, the enemy 'little birds' are left to you."

"Roger ... then let the hunting begin."

Four fighters broke through the cloud, diving down from the sky.

...

The series of explosions destroyed all the air defense firepower of F's 21st division. It also dazed all the soldiers hidden in the forest.

Without a lot of time to react, the honing noise of an airstrike

approached them.

"Enemy fighters detected! Dammit, they're shooting at our people! Where are our anti-air cannons?! We need assistance!" A reconnaissance soldier curled behind a sandbag while shouting into the radio.

There was no response.

He couldn't see that inside the barracks of the commanding soldier, the commander was lying in a pool of blood along with his assistant and bodyguard. There was a terrifying bloody hole on his forehead.

The perpetrator of this crime, the Ghost Agent, was long gone.

Soaring air strikes replied to the shouting of the reconnaissance soldier. The infantry, ten meters away from him, turned into dust along with the sandbag he hid behind due to the fire of 27mm machine guns.

Then he saw ten explosions in the sky. The explosions belonged, without a doubt, to the FA-50s of the Country F Air Force.

It was their most proud creation, the fourth generational plane based on the original SK "Golden Eagle" design. It marked the friendship between Country SK and Country F... But it was now turned to pieces.

In the direction of Port D, missiles launched into the air one by one. The Country F soldiers watched the missiles covering their zone of control in despair. But what shocked them was that the missiles didn't cause any casualties, as if they malfunctioned. Only arcs of electricity flashed in the area before instantly disappearing.

The hiding reconnaissance soldier wanted to report the information back to the command center, but he was instantly stunned.

The radio was broken.

Not only his radio, but his GPS, watch, electronic scope, and even his flashlight all stopped working!

His face looked like he had just seen a ghost.

In modern warfare, losing access to information meant losing everything. The soldiers who lost their command system were like rats locked in a cage; they would await their deaths in darkness and chaos.

The EMP missiles destroyed all the electronic equipment in the area and the entire 21st division had lost communication.

At the same time, Moro's 5th Infantry Division launched their attack!

The guerrillas never fought an easier war than this. Under the stimulation of friendly firepower, they charged forward as if they were on stimulants. The Country F soldiers that lost all communication fled as if they were flies without heads. Under the attack of thousands of guerillas, they had to fight for their own lives.

The soaring Aurora-20s made their rockets and cannons into a nightmare Country F soldiers tried their best to avoid. Flames spread in the subtropical rainforest as they were thirsty for splattered blood.

Under attack from the Moro 5th infantry division, F's 21st division collapsed without much of a fight.

At the same time, Celestial Trade's Marines boarded the helicopters and landed east of the mountain. 1000 soldiers in kinetic skeletons under fire coverage from ship cannons, fighters, and drones pursued the 15th Mountain Range Division. Against agile kinetic skeletons, even if F soldiers were at a numerical advantage, they were disadvantaged in this battle.

It was a one-sided battle.

The battle didn't last for too long. The Second Army Command

Post didn't have time to react before news of the breakdown of their frontline arrived on Belli's table.

"Retreat! Make the 15th Division retreat! And the dumba*ses from 21st Division! Fu*k, useless!" Belli pounded his table in anger and his cap even flew off.

The soldier looked nervously at him.

"Commander..."

"Why are you not going?!" Belli wanted to slap this guy.

People were dying every second, and his heart was bleeding.

"The 15th Division is surrounded..."

Belli took a moment to process this before he gulped with unease.

"What about the 21st Division?"

"We're unable to get a hold of the 21st division. Commander? Commander! Where are you going?"

The soldier looked at Belli, who rushed out the door in shock. His cap had yet to be picked up from the floor.

He climbed into his car and rudely ordered the driver to take him to the 14th Division command post in City K. The pupils of the commander were filled with fear and ferocity.

This wasn't a war! This was a slaughter!

Chapter 580: You don't have another choice

The 21st Division that lost contact was wiped out by Moro guerrillas. Including the commander, all six thousand soldiers were captured.

The 15th Mountain Range Division under suppressive fire by ship cannons and fighter planes suffered heavy losses in their equipment and they chose to surrender to Celestial Trade. Therefore, the Celestial Trade Marines achieved an outstanding record of 1000 people capturing 7000 soldiers.

In this asymmetrical war, the disadvantaged side had no ability to fight back at all. Country F, who gathered all their forces, faced defeat just like Iraq in the Gulf War. Through satellites in synchronous orbit, the one-sided war was broadcasted to the aircraft carrier battle group hundreds of kilometers out.

The pilots who boarded the fighter jets were ordered to exit the plane, the bombers inspecting weapons and ammunition returned to the hanger, and the fully equipped marines unloaded their rifles and walked out of the helicopters.

At the control tower, Captain Huffman stared at the screen with a troubled look before squeezing out two words.

"What a bunch of trash."

"Indeed, trash." The second-in-command who stood beside him gulped and repeated his words in the same troubled voice.

Regarding Country F, their ally who couldn't be helped no matter how hard they tried, the UA soldiers stationed in Asia despised them from the bottoms of their hearts. But now, they felt sympathy for the two divisions who were bulldozed through.

"Report to the Capital."

"What about the battle readiness?"

"Deactivate it for now."

Captain Huffman left the command room without turning his head, leaving the second-in-command staring at the communicator inside.

At the same time, in Xin, hundreds of kilometers out:

Inside the detention room of the military base on New Moon Island, a Slavic-looking man sat on the bench while looking gloomily at Jiang Chen sitting across from him.

He had been locked up there for the past few days, but Celestial Trade didn't torture him. Not only did they give him two nutrient supply packs a day, but they also gave him a copy of the newspaper. They didn't interrogate him at all.

"Looks like you're not injured." Ladisiv said with a gloomy expression.

"You should thank me for my kindness; at least my people still let you read the news." Jiang Chen crossed his fingers in front of his kneecap. "But for your neighbor, we're repeatedly testing the limits of his regeneration abilities."

A drop of sweat rolled down from Ladisiv's forehead, and his chin quivered. "You're the devil."

"You really think so?" Jiang Chen laughed, leaned into his chair, then pushed a document in front of the Slavic man.

He received the good news from the frontlines already, and now he had plenty of time to take care of miscellaneous things.

Ladisiv scanned the document before looking at Jiang Chen with questions in his eyes.

"Can you not read? This is the death count for City K. This number is updated every day. A total of 253,000 people died because of the virus - the virus you spread. Who is the devil? It's you, Mr. Ladisiv." Jiang Chen tapped his shadow reflected on the

bulletproof glass.

Ladisiv looked at Jiang Chen, unbothered.

As a mercenary, he didn't feel guilty for the actions he committed. The money he earned was all money stained with blood anyways. If he made a mistake during a mission, he would just become part of that casualty count.

Suddenly, he realized something odd.

"How do you know my name?"

Jiang Chen raised his eyebrows and laughed.

"Not only do I know your name, but I know you have two daughters and one son who are at a welfare institution in Thrace, Republic of Macedonia. Your oldest daughter is in high school, and your youngest daughter is in the hospital. I also know your ex-wife is currently an assistant at a broadcasting channel at the Balkans. She's still single and still interacts with you over the phone..."

"That's enough!"

Ladisiv was breathing heavily while looking at the expressionless Jiang Chen with his pupils glowing red.

He looked like a monster trapped in a cage. His pupils were mixed with warning, threat, and powerless fear.

Upon seeing this, a smile appeared on Jiang Chen's lips. Although it wasn't moral to threaten people with their family, he didn't have the luxury to be picky.

"Who told you this?!" Ladisiv squeezed out these words between his teeth.

"There were three people in total. Other than the already deceased Mr. Giles, my friends, the Moro guerillas, captured another one of your people. Obviously, not everyone could resist our truth-telling serum. Although he didn't have too much information in his head, it contained some interesting facts

surprisingly."

Jiang Chen's body leaned slightly forward and he put his crossed fingers onto the table.

"I'm really curious as to why would someone like you joined the Kurofune. You should know that their actions will destroy the world. Everyone, including your lover and children, won't survive... and that also includes you."

"Then let it be destroyed since this world is corrupt to the bone... especially since the Kurofune will arrive in one hundred years, I won't live to see the apocalypse in my lifetime," Ladisiv sneered.

Insignificant figures wouldn't ever feel worried about the world after their deaths because they never made lasting marks on this planet.

Jiang Chen understood why he thought that way. If it wasn't for his massive assets, he wouldn't bother caring about the colonization ship either.

"This is quite an important piece of information. The Kurofune you described will arrive in one hundred years..." Jiang Chen wrote it down in his notebook then looked at him. "And then? I want to know your motive."

"Money." Ladisiv, who could be read like a book, no longer disguised any information. He spoke honestly.

"Then I'll give you money to buy the information in your head?" Jiang Chen pleasantly offered.

To him, any problem that could be solved with money wasn't a problem at all.

But Ladisiv scorned and mocked him.

"Do you think I need money for myself?"

"For your... little daughter?" Jiang Chen flipped through his information and speculated nonchalantly.

"For my family," Ladisiv said emotionlessly. "If I reveal anything, they will kill my family. Trust me, their penetration in this world is far more terrifying than you can imagine."

"Is that so?" Jiang Chen didn't question that. He pressed the tablet a few times and opened a picture then he pushed it in front of Ladisiv. "But to me, they're just a bunch of sewer rats."

Ladisiv's body leaned forward and he moved closer to the tablet with his eyebrows raised. "This is ..."

The picture was an Italian-style red brick structure with a crowded scene. In front of a clothing shop, a blonde woman held onto the hand of a little girl to shop inside.

Suddenly, he realized the location was his hometown, a small town in Macedonia - Thrace.

The woman was his ex-wife and the girl she was holding onto was his older daughter. They were picking out clothes for the little daughter.

"You haven't been back for a while, right?" Jiang Chen asked.

"Your people are following them?" Ladisiv lowered his voice.

"They are protecting them. You should notice that after you were captured, a few men with unknown origins appeared. If they find out you leak the information, they will..."

Jiang Chen made a shooting gesture with a smile.

"Don't you want to save them?"

Ladisiv's throat moved. His eyes were torn with hesitation. Jiang Chen acutely noticed this and covered the proud curvature on his mouth while staring straight into his pupils.

"You will save them?"

"Of course."

"How can you guarantee that?" These continuous questions

exposed the uncertainty in Ladisiv's mind.

Now, to gain his cooperation, Jiang Chen just needed to be firm...

"You don't have another choice. Watch them die, or join us and save them. The decision is in your hands, Mr. Ladisiv."

Yes, aside from trusting Jiang Chen, he had no other choice.

Ladisiv zoomed onto the woman in the tablet. His gloomy voice muttered:

"If you break your promise, I'll wait for you in hell..."

"Don't worry. I don't think I'll go to hell after I die." Jiang Chen started to spin his pen again with a smile.

Chapter 581: Soldiers Surrounding the City!

Santos still could not believe it.

Even when the joyous division commander of the 5th Division placed the report in front of him, Santos still could not believe that the victory came so easily.

Against the advanced equipment and sophisticated training of Country F's troops, the guerrillas seldom won in battles. They only relied on terrain advantages as the armor units couldn't traverse across the mountains and jungles. Therefore, they regained a little advantage in those battles. The guerrillas constantly tested the bottom line of Country F's government through the stalemate.

However, with the support of Celestial Trade, his troops defeated two divisions of Country F's government forces and advanced to the suburbs of City K again three days later. If it were not for the fact that Country F would not give up City K, Aquino might have brought up negotiations in exchange for the return of thousands of captured prisoners, two division commanders, and the Navy Admiral.

The fiasco on MLL Island was well beyond Country F's capabilities and beyond the capacity of Aquino authority. UA's reluctance to come to their aid may also be because of hidden reasons.

Originally the Army commander and the Navy commander vowed to him that they would surely win. Now, one turned into a turtle with his head shrunk in its shell while the other became a prisoner of war of Celestial Trade. Country F Navy had more than 120 ships in total. Almost all the ships were mobilized to demonstrate its prowess.

The result was that 101 ships were destroyed in the Pacific Ocean and more than 4000 sailors were captured as prisoners of war. Not to mention the grief of Aquino, the pace of Celestial Trade's

advancement also terrified the Capital on the other side of the Earth.

However, they also didn't have a solution. After learning about the naval battle on the border, the UA president immediately contacted Zhang Yaping, who was currently in the Capital for a diplomatic visit. He expressed the hope that he would restrain Celestial Trade's behavior. What he meant was: you already made so much trouble, it is time to stop. However, President Zhang Yaping expressed that there was nothing he could do.

Strictly speaking, Celestial Trade was a private military contractor and was not controlled by the country. It participated as a mercenary in the civil war and did not violate international laws. And since the UA was the largest "military contractor" in the world, their mercenaries were notorious overseas. From this perspective, the UA couldn't denounce Celestial Trade.

Of course, the so-called jurisprudent was only excuses and sounded rhetoric. The real fear of the Capital was those weapons showcased in the war. Not to mention that the mysterious sky reaper, Aurora-20, the daunting ship-based electromagnetic pulse cannon was studied by the Department of Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).

It was one of the research projects carried out by DARPA. Yet even the state-of-the-art experimental electromagnetic pulse cannons equipped on its aircraft carrier now couldn't reach the horrifying destruction they observed from their spy satellites.

One cannon shot that sunk the Hamilton patrol ship was something many UA warships could do. But one cannon shot from one hundred kilometers away that could put a hole through the ship, was a different story... Moreover, the precision was something unheard of at that range for conventional artillery. Also, the Aurora-20 demonstrated excellent performance in the dogfight with the FA-50, which also made the Capital cautious.

According to the assessment report, a conservative estimate of 30% loss to the aircraft carrier battle group was likely to result if UA tried to reestablish the non-flying zone in MLL Island airspace given the presence of Celestial Trade.

It was a conservative estimate! In peaceful times, a high loss was unacceptable to the Capital. The crash of the F35 already left the Capital in a mess with pacifists still surrounding the Capitol with signs and photos of the pilot.

What's more, the strategic role of the aircraft carrier battle group was to contain Hua. Unwise intervention in the conflict between Country F and Xin would result in the disruption of UA's strategic deployment in the region.

The outbreak of the zombie virus in City K gave the greatest headache to the Capital. Because of Country F's control of the news, media reports generally suspected that the virus was a biochemical weapon deployed by Country F government in City K. Aquino did not have enough evidence to clarify this point, but just used "lies" and "slander" against the media.

Any mature politician would be aware of how foolish it was to scold the media. However, even the most mature politician would have a hard time remaining rational during this time. In many cases, it was not wise to publicly support the Country F government at this moment.

Of course, some politicians also proposed that Moro would leak the virus to the terrorists, given Moro's current hostility toward the UA.

An appeasement strategy would be no different from a chronic poison. After all, there was currently no vaccine or antidote to control this virus. Once the virus was spread in a densely populated area, the consequences would be disastrous. Although the Walking Died had a good rating; this did not mean that the people really wanted their country to become a zombie land.

It was precisely because of this that some politicians also immediately proposed that the UA Marine Corps be sent to City K. Or at least peacekeeping troops, and the WHO's medical team should be dispatched to bring the city into the joint control of the international community. Viruses that threaten human society should be managed by all of humanity...

As the Capital discussed which tactics to adopt, the Celestial Trade Marine Corps assembled in the southern mountain ranges of City K, redeploying artilleries using transport helicopters. The 5th Moro Guerrilla Division, after having confiscated Country F's UA-made equipment, became the division with the most sophisticated equipment in the country.

After a short reorganization period, all prisoners were taken over by the 6th Division, and the 5th Infantry Division followed the path of Celestial Trade Marine Corps and captured the largest airport in northern MLL Island, City K International Airport, with the help of the Aurora-20.

With two divisions defeated in a day, Country F Army's morale was completely destroyed. When they defended the airport, they didn't offer too much resistance before they retreated toward City K. The morale of the 14th Division stationed in City K hit rock bottom.

The constant sound of fighters soaring above them made them hide under cover. The noise previously belonged to their allies, but now it has turned into a nightmare. They could only shiver in the bunker while keeping their heads low. The battles in the city was not as easy as the battles in the jungle, especially with Country F's defensive stance.

The 14th Division was one of the most elite military units in Country F's Army. Not only has it participated in the joint military exercises, but the two Motorized Brigades were the only modernized units that were appraised by the UA instructors.

As Aquino was determined to protect City K at all cost, Country F Army commander mobilized another tank brigade from the northern theater to strengthen defenses. In order to make up for deficiencies in their air force, the original decommissioned F-5A "Freedom Fighter" was also dragged out from the grave and entered service after some simple maintenance.

The F-5A accompanied the OV10 Mustang Fighter to fill the blank in their air force. However, Country F's pilots were fearful toward the "Flight of Death". Using F-5A to combat Aurora-20, which was unmatched even by the FA-50 was like using a toothpick to poke an elephant, they simply didn't have the courage to climb into the cockpit.

With the low morale in the military, Aquino in a deep rage couldn't do anything about this fate. He had to visit the army countless times to boost their morale through passionate speeches. But the soldiers' reactions were mild; his speeches were received by sparse applause and more supercilious looks.

In order to not cause the leader to be sad, the observant Country F military officers gave each soldier a pair of sunglasses...

While Country F was in crisis, Tanaka from Takeda Pharmaceutical was under political inquiry from the Nippon government. The spread of the virus far exceeded the expectations of the Prime Minister.

Not only did Jiang Chen not die, Xin also put the blame on Country F and sent troops as a response. Country F was one of the strategic allies of Nippon, and Nippon was not willing to see one of its allies be attacked.

Country F served a key role in containing Hua in the region, especially given the close relationship between Hua and Xin lately...

Also, the mutiny committed by the F35 made the Nippon government fearful of Kurofune. The dog that was being raised by

them even extended its claws to its master without their knowledge. CIB was now involved in the current investigation.

Nippon politicians knew how sensitive the UA was to conspiracy. In order not to bring trouble, it was necessary to train this disobedient dog...

Chapter 582: The Origin of Kurofune

"Mr. Tanaka, don't you think you should really explain what happened these three days?"

A long table made to seat twelve was filled with all the Nepon parliament members; Tanaka sat at the end of the table and responded to all the criticisms with a smile.

"Explain? I don't think I need to explain, Mr. Akasaka," Tanaka said with a smile.

"Don't need to explain? Our strategic ally in the region suffered heavy losses, and you're saying you don't need to explain? Mr. Tanaka, we gave you the operational freedom not for you to forget your own identity." Akasaka knocked on the table while blurting out aggressively.

"Most importantly, Jiang Chen didn't die." Nishio pushed up the frameless glasses on his nose, "by the looks of it, our plan to expand influence in Xin and acquire Future Technology won't be able to take place."

"Takeda Pharmaceutical Board shares the same thoughts. While exposing the dangerous virus increased the company's stock price in the short term, it didn't create growth in our revenue."

Tanaka's expression was extremely calm in front of the criticisms from the Nippon parliament members and the board representative of the sponsor.

"Didn't you all agree to test the virus in Country F?"

Tanaka's one sentence silenced the room.

Just like what Tanaka said, testing the virus in Country F was the Nepon parliament members' decision. Although Tanaka first proposed to test the virus in Wanghai, it was vetoed by the assembly. While the virus was prepared for Han, the timing was absolutely off. Nippon hoped to produce more finished products

and spread the virus simultaneous to deal the killing blow to the annoying arch enemy.

So that vest went onto the plane, and the plan was blown down near Country F's sea territory. The previous crash was intended for City S that allowed for better containment, but it ended up crash landing in the City K on MLL Island.

Just then, the Defense Minister who sat at the head of the table that has been silent spoke out.

"I just have one question, why did you decide to infiltrate the UA Navy?"

"We didn't infiltrate anyone, and it is just Kurofune's advanced ideology that attracted Mr. Gordan. Two years ago during his tour in East City, he came to find me asking to join the organization," Tanaka said.

"It is unwise to draw the attention of UA," the Defense Minister stared into Tanaka's eyes and said word by word.

"I will remember your words of caution," Tanaka put his head down and replied humbly.

...

Ladisiv confessed everything without any information hidden, and the lie detector proved this point.

First, it was the origin of Kurofune. Because 16 years ago a coincidental astronomical observation event caused Tanaka to join Kurofune and work for them.

"Wait, Tanaka is not the founder of Kurofune?" After recording the specific details of Kurofune, Jiang Chen asked.

Before the interrogation, Jiang Chen already told Ladisiv that Tanaka and the Professor was the same person.

"No, the origin of Kurofune could be traced to pre-World War Two. The Holy Emperor at the time was the honorary leader of

Kurofune, and that was the most glorious time of the organization."

"But it didn't even appear in history."

"Because it is inappropriate for it to appear." Ladisiv paused, "I only know one point, the Holy Emperor visited Europe in 1921 and met Felter in Belgium who was researching in the field of astronomy and biology. He took Felter back to Nippon after and funded his research in extra-territorial civilization which marked the founding of Kurofune. The ideology of the Kurofune before was "use the alien force to conquer the earth". But after they established contact with extra-territorial civilization, the organization's belief started to change. They didn't manage to wait for the Golden Apple, Nippon lost, the Holy Emperor lost his power, a series of reasons that caused Kurofune to decline to the point of collapsing."

"And you managed to establish contact?" Jiang Chen asked.

Jiang Chen didn't feel too surprised by this. The fact Tanaka knew his ability already proved his point.

"Yes, I don't know the exact time, but it seemed to be at the end of the 90s." Since it was not something he was interested in, Ladisiv took some effort before he recollects his thoughts.

Nippon was facing an unprecedented economic crisis at the time, and the entire country was in the gloom of bankruptcy. At the same time, it was the rise of Han.

Perhaps at that time, someone's apocalyptic thought and determination gained the response for Natural Selection.

"Another question. I noticed that you mentioned the Golden Apple, then do you know about the Willie Society?"

"During the Second World War, we were allies. But now, we are enemies."

"Why?"

"Based on Tanaka's description, we had a fundamental difference in our communication channels," Ladisiv said.

Jiang Chen narrowed his eyes without saying anything. Ladisiv's words contained a lot of information that he needed time to process.

'A fundamental difference in communication channels? Did they contact two different groups of people? The two are enemies, where did the difference arise; interest or belief?'

"Let's put this question aside for now. I've a pretty good understand of Kurofune already. Now..." Jiang Chen glanced at his watch, his pen tapping on the notebook, "why would you be immune to the truth-telling liquid?"

Ladisiv shook his head. "That I don't know. I'm not a doctor, only a mercenary that did the dirty work for him. I don't even know what the truth-telling liquid is."

"I see." Jiang Chen pondered while he tapped on his shoulder.

Ladisiv then seemed to have recalled something.

"But all the core members are injected with a special serum that could increase brain cell activity and muscle strength... perhaps it has to do with that."

"Genetic vaccine!" Jiang Chen's pupils narrowed.

"I don't know," Ladisiv shook his head, "I just know that it is one of the few technologies that 'Kurofune' actually gifted to the organization of Kurofune. They are very conservative with transferring technology to the point where it can be described as stingy. Also, their technology seems to be heavily focused on biotechnology which is the most incredible point... Could biotechnology alone achieve galactic travel?"

Even Ladisiv without too much knowledge questioned this point. But Jiang Chen who witnessed the humongous ship with his own eyes didn't question if Natural Selection could reach Earth at all.

"If it is the genetic vaccine... that explains the regeneration ability of the captive," Jiang Chen nodded and muttered to himself.

Should it be described as fortunate or unfortunate? Although they achieved a lot in biotechnology, from the effect of the genetic vaccine, their technology seemed to have stopped at pre-war levels or have even regressed... They did abandon the human body after all and stepped onto the path of Harmony.

Of course, he didn't eliminate the possibility where they were reserved about transferring technology.

"One last question. Why could I use... that ability in City K." Without being able to disclose the details, Jiang Chen could only ask vaguely.

Ladisiv was completely lost as Jiang Chen's ambiguous question. To be cautious, Tanaka clearly didn't tell him Jiang Chen's ability to interdimensional travel.

The progress of the conversation stalled. Just as Jiang Chen was debating if he should ask the guards to leave and make the question more clear, Ladisiv spoke.

"Giles said that you couldn't escape in three days. He described the ability as some particle interference. I don't really understand, but it had to do with that 'Kurofune'."

Tanaka could contact Natural Selection through some means or "Kurofune" in their words. At the same time, Natural Selection could use a method to interfere the Klein particles on earth and stop his ability to travel.

The time limit of this is likely to be three days, and this ability must have a cooldown time with a high cost. Or they could just continue to maintain this interference state and lock Jiang Chen eternally in the modern world. Then there would be no need to fight the war.

Without utilizing the power from the apocalypse and just depending on the resources in the modern world, Jiang Chen had zero confidence to win at all.

"I appreciate all of this, Mr. Ladisiv. Humanity will remember your contribution. Also, you will be able to meet your family very soon on Coro Island." Because of Ladisiv's cooperation, the interrogation ended quickly.

He was delighted because he managed to see the trap cards hidden in Tanaka's hand.

"I hope you can fulfill your promise."

"Of course, I will pay you a handsome reward. But in the next five years, you and your family will not be permitted to leave the border. You will be very safe living in Xin. The Ghost Agents and the army of Celestial Trade will guarantee that," Jiang Chen pleasantly said.

When he felt pleasant, he didn't mind sharing his good mood.

Chapter 583: The City K Battle

The rural area of City K; three kilometers from the frontline.

It was the modern world, but the cold northern gust was mixed with the desolateness of the apocalypse and scattered into the corners of the streets.

City K had never snowed before, nor had it been this cold.

In the dark corners, the homeless and stray dogs could occasionally be seen living together. The supermarket on the street had been long closed leaving the hungry people inside searching for edible food. If they discovered fantastic loots, people who felt guilt would leave some cash on the unattended cashier, but most people chose to leave after they turned off their flashlight.

It didn't make a difference since the F Pesos was worthless. The rich and the poor both starved. USD still had some purchasing power, but no one was willing to sell food or valuable medicines.

Yesterday, the Moro guerillas had pushed to there again, and this time, they were even more ferocious. But regardless if they arrive or not, no trucks packed with food would arrive. Since a couple of kilometers away, a terrifying infection crisis was happening.

The civilians had long foregone their previous political stance, regardless of who is better, they wanted the stupid war to end.

Whether it was Country F 14th Division that quarantined the city or the Moro guerrillas, they didn't look like good guys in the locals' eyes. As to Celestial Trade, they rarely appeared in the sight of the ordinary people. So the locals didn't have a much better impression on the mercenary with equipment comparable to an actual army.

Invaders? Perhaps

But who cares?

To prevent the Moro guerillas from pushing forward, the 14th Division sent a large number of snipers and buried anti-personnel landmine at strategic locations.

This did interfere with Moro's 5th Division's push forward since Moro lacked tanks and armored vehicles, their force was mostly comprised of infantries and machine gunners. The highly precise snipers were obtained from the hands of F's 21st Division.

But not only did the guerillas died under the scope of the snipers and landmines, but more civilians without combat experience also died.

This place was the blind spot to humanitarianism.

To get rid of the troublesome snipers, Celestial Trade chose to airstrike.

The invisible Ghost Agents used laser positions to aim at the targets, and the Aurora-20 fired a stream of bullets over to shred the sniper and the building he hid in, into dust. To avoid causing civilian casualties, Jiang Chen ordered to avoid using bombs in the city area.

It was not out of kindness. It was to avoid disadvantageous evidence against Celestial Trade in the international society.

Even then, the snipers still delayed two day's time.

The situation was about to end very soon.

The night of December 31st.

Celestial Trade's Command Center ordered a full-scale attack, launching an attack on City K during the night of New Year's Eve and eliminating Country F's modernized 14th division and the tank brigade mobilizing for assistance. The goal was to take control of the city before January 2nd.

The attack initiated from Celestial Trade's missiles.

The EMP missiles first blew up on the east side of the city and

completely destroyed 14th Division's electronic equipment.

But since the 14th division was the elite force of Country F, when the second missile was launched into the air, they launched an anti-missile attack on Celestial Trade's launch ground. Eight 155 mm cannons almost decimated an entire hill, but they didn't fire for long before they were turned into scraps by the missiles of Aurora-20.

To avoid the airstrike from Celestial Trade, Country F dug deep into their heads for methods out. For example, use grey cloths to cover the cannon, to hide the tanks among buildings, launch attacks when Moro soldiers were approaching...

But when the EMP missiles arrived in the battle, all trickeries lost their purpose.

Without the report from reconnaissance, the soldiers could only use smoke distance and instincts to fire.

The situation of the tank brigade was better. Fortunately for the regressed equipment, the "Scorpion" reconnaissance tank used as the primary tank belonged to the last century anyway. While it was not designed with anti-radiation and anti-EMP functionality like the modern tanks, there was no advanced equipment to destroy.

The 14th Division faced the same situation the defeated 21st Division faced. All electronic equipment was destroyed, and the control system completely collapsed.

At the same time, the illuminating bombs rose into the air and lit up the pitch black sky to the southwest of the city. With the assistance of the vehicle mounted machine guns, the Moro 5th Division force with high morale started to take charge like a direct hit on the face of the 14th Division elites.

On the other hand, under the stark contrast, the city's southeast corner was deadened dark.

500 Celestial Trade Marines under the transport of ten heavy cargo planes airdropped to the edge of the zombie occupied zone.

Because they were injected with E-Grade genetic vaccines, the soldiers were completely immune to the zombie virus. They didn't need to worry about infection despite not wearing protective suits.

With the help of night vision goggles, the 500 soldiers and over 1000 Hummingbird drones were like a sharp blade in the darkness that stabbed fiercely at the heart of the 14th division zone of control. With the guidance of Sky Eye X1, they cleared out the cannons and anti-air machine guns scattered across the city.

This night, the 14th Division soldiers felt a deep fear because of the asymmetrical war.

The F-5A and Mustang fighters stationed at the air force base refused to take over. Against the fighters that even the FA-50 could not defeat, everyone knew it would be a one-way trip.

Santos felt unfortunate about this. He had seen the terrifying reaping ability of the Aurora-20. Other than the fifth generation fighters on the aircraft carrier that could pose a limited threat, despite how many paper airplanes Country F sent, their only destiny was to rest on the ocean floor.

Six in the morning, the sun has yet to rise, but the battle in the city was mostly over.

The defeat of the 14th Division was inevitable, the tank brigade and mechanized brigade all surrendered to Moro, leaving only ten snipers in the city, resisting.

Belli left the 11th Infantry Division resisting in the safe zone and boarded a transport cargo anchored at the port.

Because the city was under quarantine, all the cargos were seized in the port.

The order was personally signed by Aquino, but now that the flames of war were about to burn him, Belli couldn't care more.

He took his guards and close officials to board the cargo, woke up the crew seized at the port and ordered them to leave the port.

The explosions and flames soon broke out near the safe zone. Belli was cruising on the open sea, he only let a breath of relief after he saw City K turned into a black dot in the distance.

Although the criticisms from the Presidential Palace and the media would make this life difficult for the next half of a year, at least he won't become a captive of the guerillas which made him feel somewhat reassured.

"How much longer before we arrive at City S?"

"Around one hour more... Dammit, I finally know why the 21st Division lost communication." Standing beside him, the still startled Sergeant Cavell gulped.

"That's an odd missile."

Belli's face was covered in gloom.

Country F soldiers didn't lose on will or tactics, they lost on technology. The gap in the latter felt the most helpless. The former could be fixed with training and mental training, but the latter could not be fixed in a short period of time.

Unless UA takes the risk of aggravating Hua and installs the missile defense system in Country F and sell Country F the latest fifth-generation jet, they didn't have any odds of winning at all.

But thinking back, even if UA was willing to sell, they won't have the money to purchase. One fifth generation jet cost over one hundred million and the defense budget of Country F per year at most could purchase two jets.

Just as Belli was thinking how he should handle Aquino's criticism, he didn't have the slightest idea how visible he was under the watch of the Sky Eye X1 satellite.

Chapter 584: Playing with Fire

The zombies were indeed a problem for the Country F government force, Moro, and Celestial Trade. It was impossible to expect a bunch of poorly organized guerillas to learn infection control despite they just took over 21st Division's UA weapons.

Because it was the modern world, he couldn't use the apocalypse's way to resolve problems. What solution was the most direct in resolving the crisis at City K? The most efficient way was to launch thousands of burning bombs and scorch everything inside. And since the opponent was Country F, Jiang Chen wouldn't feel too burdened executing this order.

And what was presented to him, in the end, will be a figure.

But if he really did that, without needing this to process through his head, the world will not spare him as a butcher.

City K was taken over, the outcome at MLL Island had been decided.

Therefore, on the push toward the safe zone, the Moro 5th Division without armor protection did pay a heavy price. While the guerillas performed well compared to the government force in shooting their previous kind, it wasn't much better.

In the end under the assistance of Celestial Trade Marines, the 5th Division under the pressure of the zombies eliminated the last mechanized brigade of the Country F 14th Division. The last two remaining M113A2 armored vehicles chose to put out the white flag and surrender.

The war was over. Other than some government forces still remaining in the northern area, Moro had established full control of the MLL Islands. Just like what Jiang Chen said, Celestial Trade will successfully knock the opponent out, and then drag their necks and force them to sign on the negotiation table.

Without exaggeration, in modern warfare, the importance of negotiations could exceed all previous efforts.

The latter only dictated how many people died, the former would determine how many will go die.

...

Before Celestial Trade soldiers entered City K's safe zone, the survivors in the area rioted. Having robbed the shotguns and flamethrowers that belonged to the cleaners, and beating up at least ten cleaners due to their build-up hatred, the survivors that occupied the safe zone had a brief standoff against the Moro guerillas through the barbed fences. However, when they saw the captured armored vehicles and tanks drove over, everyone dropped their weapons and squatted by the wall with their hands over their head.

When Jiang Chen saw how malnourished the survivors looked on the battle footage, while he felt compassionate, he had another plan. He called Ivan who arrived at the safe zone and told him to take care of the survivors.

Then, Jiang Chen instructed the promoted Xia Shiyu to transport 1000 tons of rice, vegetable, crackers, and milk through Future Group's subsidiary by air City K Airport and distribute it to the local survivors.

Celestial Trade's philanthropic act instantly gained the praise of the survivors. When Celestial Trade's people asked them to assist the media in capturing video footages in order to help Celestial Trade to win international recognition, no one rejected the idea.

Jiang Chen gained another chip in steering the public opinion.

While the ground force entered the city, the navy didn't stop either.

A Guardian-class frigate with the accompany of a Kilo-class submarine entered into the strait and anchored in the region. The

Type-50 J-type electromagnetic pulse cannon aimed toward the capital of F.

Celestial Trade's action almost made Aquino collapse down from his chair in fear. Only now did he experience the fear the soldiers on the frontline experienced.

The fear of the cannon at his front door.

The Country F Assembly Committee was completely in shambles. They previously spent time forging sovereignty documents and attempting to claim Pannu Islands as part of Country F's historical sovereignty. But now, they immediately destroyed the documents while changing the discussion to how to seek an unconditional surrender.

The other frigate and submarine moved east along the Xin-F border while on alert for the Stan aircraft carrier group stationed in the region.

All ten Aurora-20s at the New Moon Base were on 24 hours alert with the 20 pilots rotating inside the plane to respond to a potential escalation in the regional conflict.

At the same time, the G013 missile silo deployed at the west Pacific Ocean opened its hatch and slowly allowed the sea water to fill inside the silo to complete launch preparations. The G013 missile silo was deployed with the Dolphin-10 Intercontinental Ballistic Missile, the installed module was not a nuclear head but just regular explosives.

If the UA acted impulsively, Celestial Trade would prove its long-range missile strike ability several hours after.

No nuclear weapon and thus no deterrence?

Debatable!

Don't forget who controlled the city of Kejia! If a missile could transport explosives, it could also transport a virus. Would nuclear weapons or biological weapons have more deterrence; UA must

carefully evaluate this.

Now, Jiang Chen had pushed all of his chips onto the gambling table.

Whether UA would disregard the potential consequences and launch an Asian version of the "Gulf War" and punish Celestial Trade like how Iraq that invaded Kuwait was punished, or compromise similar to how Fran comprised to Frankberg at the fact the Blitz was successful, give up the not helpful ally in exchange for regional stability.

...

What is worth noting is that F didn't have the rich oil or gas reserves like Kuwait.

What if the above options all didn't work?

Then the final option was the nuclear button.

Unless he had absolutely no other choices, he didn't want to make the last choice.

...

"You're playing with fire."

The night Celestial Trade overtook the city of Kejia, Natasha rang the bell to Jiang Chen's mansion. Jiang Chen didn't want to open the door, but the girl had the determination that if Jiang Chen didn't open the door, she wouldn't let her finger go.

Losing to Natasha's determination, Jiang Chen opened the door

Since he disappeared for so long, it was time to return to the public's eyes.

But what he didn't think was that the first thing Natasha said to him was not "you're not injured?", but rather something else.

"Playing with fire? Our President Zhang seems to have told Aquino this before." Jiang Chen invited her to sit on the sofa.

"Please sit, I prepared vodka this time.

"I'm not here to drink." Natasha narrowed her eyes and examined Jiang Chen, the vibrant lips curled up thoughtfully, "I knew nothing would have happened to you, you old fox."

"I'm still young okay? Ms. Polar bear," Jiang Chen jokingly said.

"That joke is not gentlemanly at all," Natasha gave him a hard stare, walked passed him, and sat down on the sofa. However, this time, she oddly didn't touch the alcohol.

She crossed her smooth legs and crossed her arms, "What are you planning to do next? How are you going to take care of this mess?"

"Make Country F return to the negotiation table." Jiang Chen sat down across from Natasha with his legs crossed, his fingers on one of his knees.

"What if UA doesn't agree." Natasha raised her eyebrows.

"Then they should be prepared to be dealt with together."

Jiang Chen wasn't joking at all.

Chapter 585: Go Back to the Negotiation Table

The aircraft carrier battle group began to mobilize in the west Pacific direction with the fighter jets constantly taking off from the carrier to increase the patrol frequency in public waters. At the same time, a bomber was deployed at the nearby military base.

Two "ocean fortresses" clamped down on Xin's water, but it made Jiang Chen feel relieved.

The attack postures meant that they don't plant to actually attack. Or else they would not mobilize their aircraft carrier battle group and the bomber, but their nuclear submarine to launch the cruise missile.

Jiang Chen knew clearly that with just two Guardian-class frigates and the ultra-speed cruising Aurora-20s were not enough to win against the five thugs, the weapons would at most make them be extra cautious. Technology is always only an element of the war, but not everything that dictates the outcome of the war, unless the technology is powerful enough to change the structure of the war.

An Aurora-20 could simultaneously face five FA-50s, 50 Mustangs, but it would be a stretch to go against three fifth general fighters at the same time. Just like the Axis' ME262 Turbo Jet against the propeller planes of the Allies, although it caused the Allies some problems, it didn't fundamentally change the outcome of the war.

Since both sides didn't want to fight, then what's left was negotiations.

...

City K, Jiang Chen arrived at MLL Island by AN-12 cargo plane.

Ivan was there to greet him. He was the acting chief commander

at MLL Island.

The AN-12 was a Russian product sold at 50 million USD for two. Celestial Trade had been using them as transportation of humanitarian aids and weapons used to maintain humanitarianism. Out of the five thugs, only Russia was willing to sell firearms to Xin.

On the side of the airport, Jiang Chen saw four captured OV-10 "Mustang" fighters as well as a Boeing commercial plane that had been abandoned for who knows how long. Under the air suppression by the Aurora-20s, the four fighters didn't have the opportunity to take off before they were captured by the Moro guerillas.

Santos generously offered Jiang Chen two of them since both parties captured them together, but Jiang Chen thanked and rejected the offer.

The antique and second handed stuff that participated in the Vietnam war, Jiang Chen didn't even have the interest to modify it.

Sitting in the army green Jeep, Jiang Chen began to inquire Ivan about the stats.

"The airstrike consumed around 60 thousand rounds of aviation bullets, 37 bombs, 15 midrange air-to-ground missiles, 17 closerange air-to-air missiles..."

"Close to 100 million USD? War certainly burns through money." Jiang Chen narrowed his eyes and watched the desolated streets outside the window.

That was just the airstrike part, the cost to this war far exceeded 100 million USD. But as soon as Jiang Chen thought about his Celestial Trade destroying the F air force, land force, and navy with a military budget of 500 million per year, he was relieved.

Especially Moro who achieved its dream of independence will use

MLL Island's rich resources to pay for the bill of the war.

"What about the casualty number?"

"Only 11 fatalities, the soldiers in critical condition are sent to Coro Island for treatment... the smart medical pod is great."

"It is a Future product after all. Also, make sure you take care of the family of the deceased soldiers, we can't let down our soldiers," Jiang Chen ordered.

"Roger!" Ivan nodded.

The Jeep entered the city. The blinding sunlight didn't feel like the apocalypse at all. All major road and highway were controlled by Moro soldiers with protective suits and anti-poison masks provided by Celestial Trade. They were equipped with rifles and cautiously watching the blank faces stained with blood outside of the barbed fences.

The safe zone was currently under the control of Celestial Trade. The kinetic skeleton soldier checked Ivan's identity, saluted before letting the car pass.

The Jeep passed through the safe zone under the warm welcome of the survivors. Jiang Chen and Ivan then arrived at the port in City K and met the delegation sent by the Aquino government. The Aquino government could not withstand the anti-war sentiment as well as the protest from the family of the captured soldiers. It was forced to give up their firm stance to discuss the terms of releasing the captives.

Meeting Jiang Chen who clearly didn't look "critically injured", the Country F ambassador Tate's eyes were covered in gloom, he felt his government, and he was fooled.

"Ha, looks like Mr. Jiang is in good shape."

Jiang Chen nonchalantly shook his head when he faced Tate's unfriendly gaze.

"Thank you for caring. Say hello to your President for me; he must not have slept well in the last couple of days. Also, I saw that you guys were planning to host a celebration ceremony sometime before, but by the looks of it now, it won't be needed."

The mockery in Jiang Chen's voice made Tate's expression look as if he had just eaten a fly. The entire capital didn't sleep well with a cannon directly pointed toward it.

"This is?" Jiang Chen let go of Tate's hand and looked at two other people on the side.

A white man with sideburns was in a suit; the other muscular looking man wore the UA Navy uniform. Jiang Chen noticed the UA soldier was a Colonel.

"Eric, United Nations Observer." The man with white sideburns shook hands with Jiang Chen and introduced the person beside him, "This is Colonel Reston, a mediator from UA."

Jiang Chen's sight stopped on Colonel Reston for a while.

He knew that this was the actual person leading the negotiation.

After some small talk, Jiang Chen and Ivan took the two to the safe zone and met with Santos who just arrived from Port D.

With all parties at the scene, after half a year, the discussion between the Country F government and the guerillas restarted again.

"Let's put it simply, I hope everyone can put down their weapons and solve the difference on the negotiation table, Eric said straightforwardly, "This discussion has been long due. Then first
—"

"We won't give grounds on our sovereignty completely." Tate interrupted Eric's words while looking at Santos coldly, "but I brought the kindness of Mr. Aquino. Moro will exist as an autonomous territory, as long as you put down your weapons and release all illegally detained F soldiers."

Jiang Chen narrowed his eyes to gaze directly into Tate's eyes. The F citizen didn't bring out the attitude to negotiate in the first place.

"Looks like we'll have to chat in your capital then." Santos shrugged and opened his hands.

"We won't let that happen." Colonel Reston who didn't say a word spoke abruptly. He slightly raised his hooked nose and stared at Santos' smug face, "The Satan aircraft carrier battle group won't permit. If you dare to step out of MLL Island, then we must redefine the situation to a point where we must intervene, I promise that our troops won't always stay on the deck of the aircraft carrier."

Reston warned Jiang Chen with his look.

Since Santos was born a bandit, he immediately scoffed, "then my guerrillas will make MLL Islands into a second Vietnam."

...

The negotiation from the start was on the course to failure. Jiang Chen's sight scanned the United Nations observer who was smiling, the gloomy looking Tate, and the poker-faced Reston.

Just as the parties were about to call the negotiation off, Jiang Chen suddenly coughed, took out a thumb-sized bottle from his pocket, and placed it on the table.

The bottle was sealed by a mini cork with transparent and clear liquid inside. The sunshine scattering from outside of the window reflected an oily liquid inside.

"What's this?" Tate glanced at the bottle, picked it up, and put it close to his nose.

"Something to make all of us go back to the negotiation table."

Jiang Chen spoke as he put his cell phone onto the table and then looked at Reston with a smile.

Chapter 586: Within Strike Range

Reston and Eric didn't know what tricks Jiang Chen was planning. They exchanged glances before looking back at Jiang Chen, waiting for him to continue. The F representative, Tate, narrowed his eyes and repeatedly played with the bottle in his hands, hoping to find something odd.

Just as he squeezed on the cork and was about to sniff it, Jiang Chen spoke again.

"I don't suggest you do that."

Tate stopped mid-action and glared at Jiang Chen.

"Why not?"

"That's the pathogen extract from the zombies; we refer to it as the T virus."

Just as Jiang Chen's words dropped, Tate dropped the bottle in his hand, terrified. The thumb-sized bottle smashed onto the table with a "clang" and the bottle spun two times. Reston and Eric's expressions didn't look too great either. They subconsciously moved back.

"Mr. Jiang Chen, I need an explanation." Reston looked at Jiang Chen sternly. "Your careless actions will be viewed as an act of aggression against the UA. We will—"

"Aren't we negotiating today?" Jiang Chen interrupted Reston and opened his hands. "But from the start of negotiations until now, I haven't seen any sincerity. I've only seen you flexing."

"I understand flexing is an important part of negotiations since peace can only be achieved through force." Jiang Chen raised his fingers and gently tapped on the phone screen on the table. "Please allow me to demonstrate our power."

When the red button was pressed, the circular missile silo hatch

opened hundreds of kilometers below the west Pacific Ocean, exposing the fearsome Dolphin-10 Intercontinental Ballistic Missile.

The propulsion ring around the side walls of the missile suddenly created a large number of bubbles, pushing the missile to a depth of 100 meters. Afterward, it split the propulsion ring and separated it from the missile. At the same time, the missile's engine ignited while accompanied by thick smoke, leaving the ocean sea far below as it galloped toward the blue sky.

The engine stalled when it reached the near-Earth orbit. The Dolphin-10 followed the Earth's own orbit to pass across the Pacific, cross Honduras, and float across the Caribbean. The engine reignited again and the missile began to fall back toward the Earth.

Like a meteor crashing down from the sky, the missile directly hit a desolated island in the north Atlantic Ocean.

Flames instantly erupted. The debris of the explosion, along with rocks, instantly splashed across the sky. The shockwaves of the explosion swept through the sea surface near the island and even smoothened the violent waves.

A drop of cold sweat rolled down from Reston's forehead and dropped onto his sleeve.

Tate was completely dumbfounded, unable to accept the reality played out on the phone. Eric was silent as he stared at the ceiling.

"It must be a lie." Tate squeezed out this sentence with a trembling voice as he put on a tough act.

Reston and the United Nations observer both looked at Jiang Chen attempting to spot a sign on his face, but they were disappointed to discover that there was only calmness.

"I heard that the UA satellites are scattered across the world. If you don't believe me, just see for yourself." Jiang Chen sunk into his chair and said casually while inviting them to find out the truth

for themselves. "The location of the strike is on the phone."

"Our satellites aren't broad enough to monitor the North Atlantic Ocean," Reston said while staring into Jiang Chen's eyes.

"Then send people to make observations? They should at least find out the explosion impact rating." Jiang Chen rolled his eyes.

Reston didn't say anything. He was waiting for a call from the Stan aircraft carrier.

If a missile soared through the entire Pacific Ocean and Central America, it was impossible to not have been captured by UA's satellites. From the missile's trajectory, the missile should've gone through near-Earth orbit. If it climbed to the altitude of the near-Earth orbit, it should've been captured by the military base when it entered the stratosphere.

Jiang Chen knew what he was waiting for, so he didn't speak. Instead, he picked up his phone and started playing games.

Tate looked agitated because he thought he and his country were being ignored completely. Although Reston was helping him, the conversation revolved around UA and Xin from start to finish. He didn't view him as important at all nor did he ask about F's opinion. The feeling of being neglected stabled his heart like a dagger.

But Santos, on the contrary, looked calm. The revolutionary leader, born as a bandit, didn't mind his opinion being ignored on the negotiation table. He only cared about one thing - his decades-long political pursuit would finally become a reality in his hands.

Half an hour passed, and Reston couldn't sit around any longer. He glanced at the watch, took a deep breath, and stood up.

"I need to make a phone call."

"No problem. You should've called a long time ago." Jiang Chen played with his phone while responding nonchalantly.

Reston glanced at Jiang Chen and stepped outside with his satellite phone.

When he called the aircraft carrier, Captain Huffman immediately asked about the result of negotiations. If negotiations were unsuccessful, they would act accordingly and advance a few more kilometers toward Xin's waters.

But Reston was smiling bitterly.

From Huffman's words, he immediately understood that aside from himself, no UA citizens noticed the missile that flew across their backyards. After reporting the situation to Huffman, Reston hung up the phone, leaned on the wall outside the conference room, and lit himself a cigar.

His head was a mess because the lunatic who didn't play by the rules disrupted his plan. He just wanted to calm down and recollect his thoughts during a smoke break.

Half an hour passed. This time, it didn't come from an aircraft carrier but from the Capital.

A few minutes ago, a fighter jet equipped with cameras took off from a domestic military base and arrived in the airspace above the small island. From the image taken, the island looked like it was struck not long ago...

Although no one wanted to accept this, the reality was clear to everyone.

Xin... No, Celestial Trade, possessed global strike abilities.

Reston silently put his phone back and returned to the conference room.

"That took a while." Jiang Chen put down his phone. His fingers were drawing circles on the table, and he smiled at Reston back in his seat.

"Do you think one ICBM can threaten us? How many ICBMs do

you think UA possesses?" Reston said with a menacing expression.

"What about this, then? It isn't too difficult to extract this from the zombies." Jiang Chen picked up the bottle dropped by Tate and placed it squarely on the table. "Do you want to test the interception abilities of your missile defense system? For your little friend thousands of kilometers away?"

Reston's pupils drastically constricted. Tate's expression also froze.

"It's against international law to use biological weapons - you sure you want to do that?" Reston's Adam's apple bobbed up and down with unease. He placed his palms on the table.

He thought a lunatic was standing in front of him.

"Don't joke around. Do you promise UA won't use nuclear weapons in the face of survival? We're just imitating what you do. If you send out your forces, I will send out an ICBM. Either we are peaceful together, or we die together!" Jiang Chen emotionlessly replied to Reston's stare and enunciated the last sentence word by word.

Within striking range, no one could safely stay away from this mess.

Chapter 587: The Saturday War

Reston chose to compromise.

Precisely speaking, the Capital chose to compromise. Reston, the negotiation representative, spoke with the Captial for the second time and sat back down at the negotiation table.

"Celestial Trade must withdraw from MLL Islands... We can talk about independence."

When these words came out of Reston's mouth, Tate jumped up like a cat with his tail stepped on. His neck and face ballooned and reddened, and he cursed at Reston with spit flying.

"This is an obvious conspiracy! You betrayed your ally! Do you not feel ashamed?!"

Reston looked at Jiang Chen without feeling phased and ignored the furious Tate. Eric, standing by the side, could no longer sit and watch. He played the role of the middleman and began comforting Tate.

"We can withdraw, but we will keep 100 Marines here in City K. We plan to establish aid stations here to fulfill our humanitarian duty," Jiang Chen said with self-righteousness.

That sentence almost made Eric choke. It was the first time he saw someone using the cover of humanitarianism to station troops.

"You can station 50 people at most, and you can't deploy fighter jets here," Reston said.

"100 people. City K is Moro's territory, and this is our agreement with another country. Do you have the right to intervene?"

Reston looked at Santos.

Santos exposed his white teeth and the deviousness unfitting of his muscular body.

"We don't have any issues. We welcome Celestial Trade to participate in the rebuilding of Kejia as well as investing in the industry of MLL Island."

"... Okay." Reston nodded forcefully.

"Then let's talk about Moro's sovereignty. Aside from the non-disputable MLL Island, what about the S Islands—"

"Not a chance." Tate interrupted Jiang Chen.

But Jiang Chen didn't seem to notice him and continued.

"S Islands are currently under the control of Moro's 11th Brigade."

"Control is one thing, sovereignty is another—" The United Nations observer, Eric, tried to speak before being interrupted by Santos.

"These are documents outlining the sovereign rights." Santos placed a stack of documents on the table.

"It takes time to review the legality of the documents." Reston's tone deepened. "Especially compared to sovereignty, isn't the voice of the S Islands people more important? In our view, human rights are above sovereign rights."

"Is that so? Your standards are always changing." Jiang Chen mocked him.

Reston's expression looked awkward; he coughed to divert the topic.

"Our discussion is about the Suf Islands problem."

"I suggest a referendum - that's the fairest," Jiang Chen said.

"No! Unless all citizens participate in the referendum, the territory of Country F should be determined by all citizens!" Tate stomped the ground and shouted.

The unruly citizens of S Islands wanted to separate for a long time, so they couldn't permit them to vote for themselves.

"Just as Tate said. It's like a house - you can't take apart his bedroom just because he wants to leave unless everyone in the house agrees." It was the first time Reston concurred with Tate's opinion.

S Islands was the gateway to the sea. Strategically, as long as Moro controlled the area, Celestial Trade's ships could freely enter the heart of Country F. Economically, S Islands were on the belt of the Pacific Ring, which contained a large reserve of rare metals. Control by Moro meant control by Celestial Trade, therefore Jiang Chen wouldn't give up on the possession of S Islands.

The first day of negotiations faltered because of the sovereignty dispute.

The two parties each took a step back and reached a ceasefire agreement and agreed to discuss other matters the next day.

The dispute regarding territorial claims wasn't easy to resolve, especially when the Aquino government wouldn't relinquish control by any means. Jiang Chen's method was very "immoral" - during negotiations, he signaled Santos to open a family visit channel to the 34,000 Country F government soldiers in the western MLL islands. Moro permitted family visitors to cross the border, stay for a maximum of two days, and visit their captured family under the supervision of Moro soldiers.

The captured soldiers' families could maintain their composure when they didn't see them. But when they saw their sons, husbands, and boyfriends captured in camp, their tears and despair could no longer be restrained. Although the captured soldiers didn't receive inhumane treatment, they more or less were injured because of the war.

Moro had a strong stance regarding the pleas to release the captured soldiers.

"We seek peace, but we will never compromise with the enemy. If you want to see your family go home, go beg your Aquino - the

choice has always been in his hands. As long as he is willing to sign the peace agreement, we can drop our weapons and reunite with our families!"

We are also victims! We also seek peace! The villainous hat fit Aquino's head as a matter of course.

What happened next was predictable.

The soldiers' families who returned to Country F protested, cried for the end of the war, and blocked the Presidential Palace and Aquino's private home. From the experiences of the soldiers' families and wide support from other anti-war personnel and citizens who lost their income due to the war, the waves of protest grew strong and stronger. The emotion card Jiang Chen played achieved a superb effect in Country F, which was also burdened by a weak economy.

Only a minority of patriotic citizens refused to compromise and fight to the end, but their voices were already too faint. People were always changing - during peaceful times, they would probably support a war because of the pride in their hearts. But during wartime, most of them would change their minds after their quality of life began to fall.

Since the ceasefire agreement was signed, Celestial Trade joined the war for seven days, but Country F's currency depreciated by 20% while the price of goods skyrocketed by 50%. The people who demanded destroying Xin and making Pannu Islands the colony of Country F instantly calmed down and began to reflect on their lives and values.

Because of domestic pressure, the Aquino government lasted for half a month before returning to the negotiation table in humiliation.

Country F recognized Moro's independence. S Islands, MLL Island and part of the ocean territory would belong to Moro. Country F's five divisions would withdraw from the northern part

of MLL Island.

At the same time, Celestial Trade's frigates and submarines withdraw from the area. Moro's two divisions withdrew from the islands north of MLL Island and returned the control of the territory to Country F. At the same time, Moro and Country F would unconditionally release all the captured soldiers.

Therefore, Moro's pursuit of independence finally succeeded and they became the 195th sovereign nation in the world. Country F, who lost their second biggest island, collapsed from this point onward.

And Celestial Trade, who made everything happen, became the "Sovereign State" of the area and the biggest winner of the war.

Because Celestial Trade intervened in the war on Saturday and the war ended within a week, this war was also referred to as the Saturday War by the international community.

Chapter 588: Entering the Medical Field

At the signing of the peace agreement, Jiang Chen saw Aquino's comical face. From the puffy dark undereye circles and white hairs, his face was mixed in with some tragic colors.

Under the flashing of the reporters' cameras, Aquino walked up and shook the hand of the muscular Santos.

Santos gave him a smile, but he replied with a smile more ugly than upset.

Finally, the cameras hovered on the two pairs of hands holding the peace agreement. They both signed their names on the agreement and declared the conclusion of the civil war to the world.

Outside the view of the cameras, the actual facilitators behind the peaceful negotiation, Jiang Chen and Reston, were witnessing the historic moment from afar.

"I hope this is the last time." Reston stared into Jiang Chen's eyes. "You already reached our bottom line. Do you want to know the percentage in favor of war?"

"I don't want to know." Jiang Chen shook his head with a smile. "But you should know my bottom line as well."

One pistol, regardless how many bullets it contained, was still a gun when held in a baby's hands. Or rather, because it was held in a baby's hands, it was more dangerous. As long as the baby wasn't too greedy, everyone could still coexist peacefully.

Reston gave Jiang Chen a long and deep look.

"Also, CIB's agents will arrive at the MLL Islands to search for the missing fighter pilot, Gordon. I hope your people will cooperate."

"You should tell that to Santos - he's the actual owner of the island. But I think if you don't do anything sneaky, you won't be

turned away by them."

...

Jiang Chen had already ordered people to search for that pilot. Moro sent out a team to search through the mountainous forests in MLL Island too, since a UA pilot would be an important chip on the bargaining table. Unfortunately, neither Celestial Trade nor Moro discovered the whereabouts of the pilot.

Optimistically, the unlucky guy may have been blown into the volcano on the island.

Reston scoffed. He lit up his own cigar and got into the car that came to pick him up.

Jiang Chen stood at the ceremony for a while, gazing at the olive branch on the flying United Nations flag and a contemptuous smile appeared on his face.

Before the applause started, he turned around and left.

...

The war was over, and Moro owed Celestial Trade a total of 1.25 billion USD. Frankly speaking, if it wasn't for the infectious situation in City K raising his alarm, he would've wanted to drag the war on for longer. The more money Moro owed to Celestial Trade, the more control Celestial Trade would have over them and the more Moro would depend on Xin.

MLL Island was previously Country F's poorest southern area; there was no way they could pay out 1.25 billion dollars. The money could only be paid back in rich, undeveloped mining resources and fertile soils. These things were what Jiang Chen wanted the most.

The resources and land were critical to Xin. Currently, Xin and the apocalypse's mining resources and farm products were mostly imported from Australia. Although Xin had a good relationship with them, it wasn't the best to depend on someone else.

But currently speaking, Australia had no comments on the situation at Country F. They didn't want to offend Xin with a great economic outlook for Country F. Australia was in the midst of isolationism, no different from UA in the 90s.

Because of the peace agreement coming into effect, Celestial Trade withdrew the deployed frigate and the thousand Marines on MLL Island, leaving only 100 soldiers in City K for the purpose of maintaining local security in tandem with the local forces.

Yes, they were no longer called the guerillas. After the peace agreement came into effect, they became a sovereign country recognized by the United Nations. Their forces would naturally be called the government forces.

Three days after the peace agreement.

"Currently, there are over 100,000 zombies in the east of the city. Our plan is to use the Scorpion Tanks captured from Country F and form a tank battalion to recapture the five bridges that span across the river. Then we will use barbed fences to create a separation zone and gradually recover the area in the east..."

Moro 11th brigade commander, Chen Zhitian, was standing beside Jiang Chen, discussing the zombie problem in the city.

"No need to go to such trouble." Jiang Chen shook his head.

Chen Zhitian looked over at Jiang Chen with questions in his eyes while waiting for him to continue.

"T-virus - this is what our scientist named the virus. Based on clinical experiments, the virus' ability to withstand UV is extremely low, and the duration of time the virus can survive outside the body is short. As long as we maintain the quarantine in the city, the possibility of the infection spreading is low. As for the zombies... just wait for them to starve to death."

"Starve to death?" Chen Zhitian looked at Jiang Chen in shock.

"That's right." Jiang Chen nodded.

The zombies in City K were inherently different from the zombies in the apocalypse; the differences were mostly reflected in the infection mechanism. One was a viral infection whereas the other was a bacterial infection. While the former destroyed the human nervous and immune systems, it didn't resolve the zombie's energy problem. The latter was a mutated bacteria used to cleanse radiation. After finding a host, it could use the host for photosynthesis.

Any creature without food intake would die.

Even zombies couldn't escape the law of nature. As long as the zombies didn't eat each other, they would last for a month at most before they turned into dried flesh. Jiang Chen would just need to prepare a few more burners to get rid of the dead corpses.

The only problematic thing was that since the zombies had no immune system, their bodies were starting to decompose. Without containment, there was a risk of a plague erupting in the city.

Doctors from international aid organizations had already entered the safe zone and started to examine the survivors there. This included researchers from international pharmaceutical companies. Everyone wanted to understand the secret behind the virus in order to create the vaccine that could protect against it.

Under Jiang Chen's recommendations, Santos pushed out a strategy completely different from the Aquino government and didn't prevent international aid organizations from entering the city of Kejia, since Moro was too poor to fully contain the plague.

At the same time, a subsidiary of Future Group, Future Biology, held a news conference suggesting its expansion into the medical field while they sent a research team into the city of Kejia to participate in the research of T virus. The CEO of Future Biology, Tao Ming, also suggested that the researchers of Future Biology would conduct work independently without cooperation with other international medical teams.

Jiang Chen had been planning to enter the medical industry, and the infection Future Biology was working on only sped up his plan.

The T virus that shocked the world was the perfect opportunity to enter the market. Future Biology would use people's fear of the virus to make its mark in the industry. At the same time, to prevent this virus from spreading in their own country, all countries would, without a doubt, pay for the vaccine.

After the researchers in the modern world scanned the DNA of the virus, Jiang Chen went to the apocalypse and left everything to Lin Lin, who had nothing to do because of the heavy snowfall. Based on what she said, it wasn't a big deal to take care of the virus at all.

Just like that, time quickly passed to the tail end of January.

The previous virtual reality MMORPG planned for launch at the beginning of January was postponed to the end of January because of the president's air crash. There were around 100 million Phantom users around the world eagerly waiting for the launch of Godly Land.

But just then, a piece of news caught Jiang Chen's attention...

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